Liberty

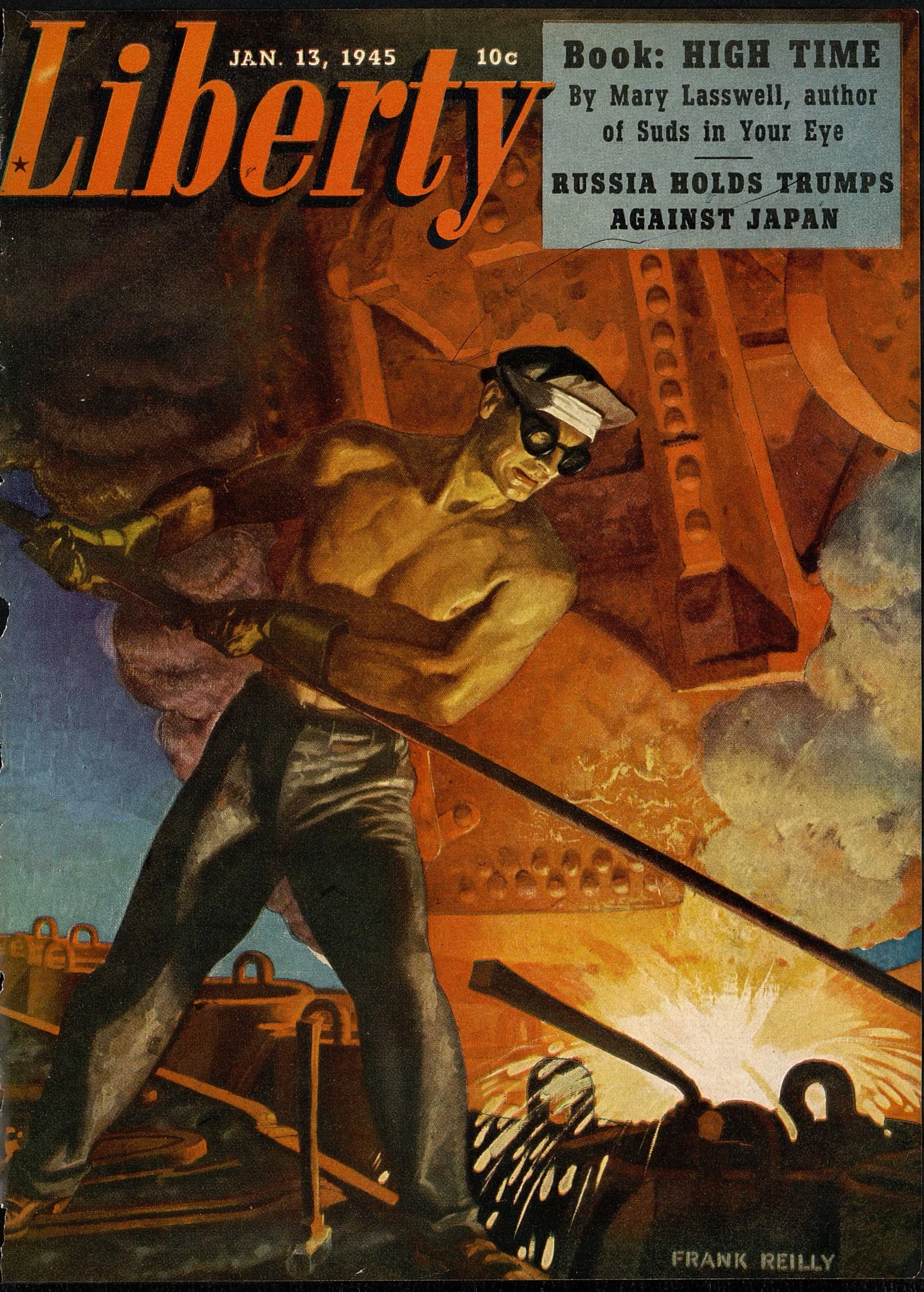
JAN. 13, 1945

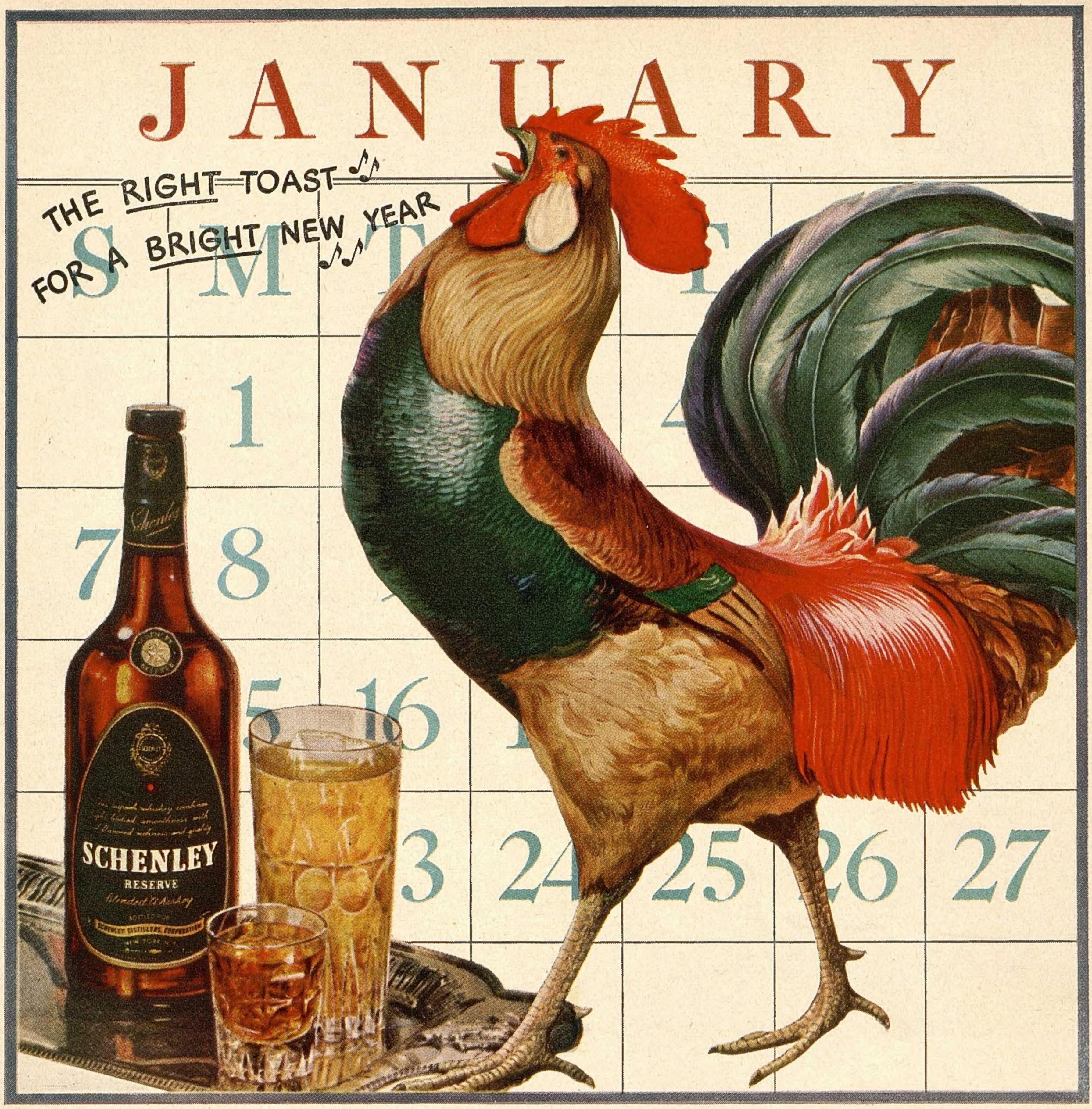
10c

Book: HIGH TIME

By Mary Lasswell, author of Suds in Your Eye

RUSSIA HOLDS TRUMPS AGAINST JAPAN


FRANK REILLY


JANUARY
THE RIGHT TOAST
FOR A BRIGHT NEW YEAR
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SCHENLEY
RESERVE
Blended Whiskey

MELLOW AND LIGHT AS A PERFECT MORNING!

WHATEVER your toast for '45 . . . you'll enjoy it more with SCHENLEY Reserve. Its bright morning taste . . . rich, mellow, and satisfying . . . makes SCHENLEY Reserve the *right* whiskey for the New Year.

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Cover: Steel—Colossus of Industry in War and in Peace
First in a series of industrial covers
Painted by Frank Reilly

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LEE WAGNER, CIRCULATION MANAGER

THE EIGHTH DEADLY SIN

Is it worse than the other seven?

What shall be done to women who commit it?

"I will never let you go," she said, and Harland knew that was a threat . . . how terrible he was to realize later.

WHAT shall be done with a beautiful woman who is so insanely jealous that she cannot bear to share any part of a man's love with anyone else or any *thing?* "Leave Her to Heaven" is the answer of Ben Ames Williams in his new best-selling book of that title. It is yours FREE if you join the Guild now—but first read about this crafty woman.

Ellen Berent lived to conquer, and stopped at *nothing* to win victory after victory over men, women and even children. She was uncanny in her analysis of human actions and reactions, and used every fair or foul means to bend them to her will. She lied, cheated, and deceived, artfully and skillfully, to attain her ends.

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Seldom before has such a character been created. Seldom before has such a novel been written. You will be kept in impatient suspense until the very end. You will find yourself completely captivated by Ellen, by Harland, by Danny the crippled younger brother, loving, hating, comforting each as though they were part of your own life.

by BEN AMES WILLIAMS
Leave Her to Heaven
Leave Her to Heaven
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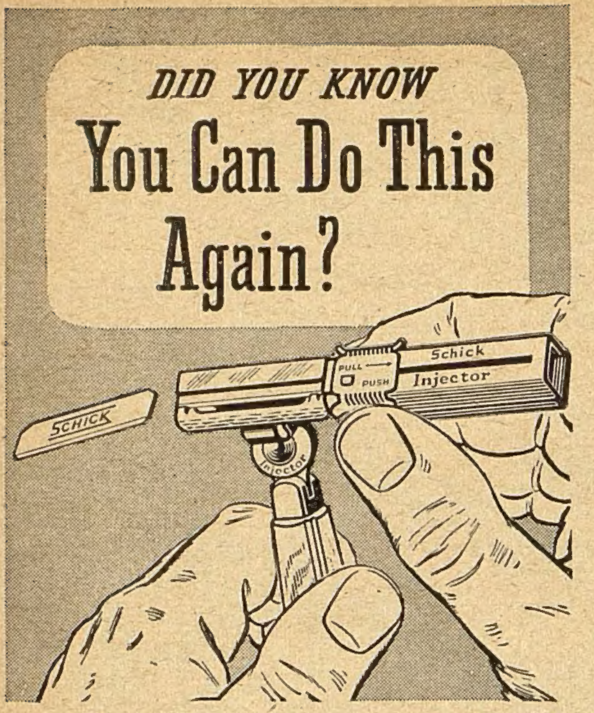

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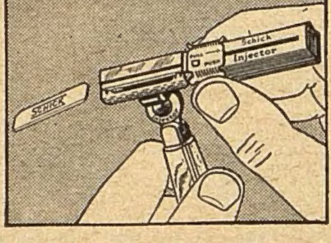

. . . an exclusive Schick Injector feature. A pull and push on the Injector shoots out the old blade, slides in a fresh one instantly. Nothing to take apart or re-assemble. No fumbling with sharp blade edges or messy paper wrappers.

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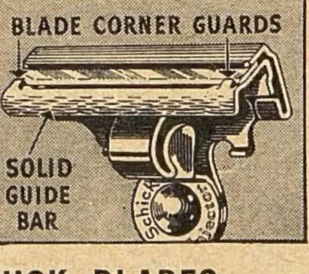

. . . has a sure-grip surface that stretches and flattens the skin just ahead of the blade. Pops up whiskers for closer, more comfortable shave. Corner guards protect against nicking and scraping.

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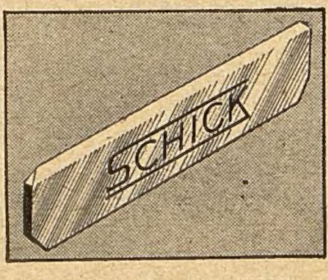

. . . just as long but twice as thick as ordinary blades. 3 times as thick as paper-thin ones. So they take and hold a really keen edge. Oil packed in special cartridge, cutting edges are suspended in space.

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VOX POP

"The Voice of the People"

TEMPEST ON A DRUMSTICK

ARDMORE, OKLA.—Your Thanksgiving cover for November 25 attracted my attention in this respect: I'm the product of the age where children waited for the second table and their elders left nothing but drumsticks for them. Therefore I was shocked to see the soldier being given the drumstick. Your artist played a dirty trick. The soldier should rate the best—a huge helping of the turkey breast minus the drumstick!—*Mrs. George N. Otey.*

Take another look, Mrs. Otey. Pop is giving Bill a big helping of all kinds of turkey, white and dark. The drumstick is just an extra bonus and also his favorite part of the bird.—VOX POP EDITOR.

SURPRISE!

CANTON, OHIO—I have been a constant Liberty fan for several years and would like to congratulate the editors upon their workmanship in editing this fine magazine. I enjoy the fiction stories especially; also the Next Week column. I always like to see what next week's Liberty will give us, but I wish that the picture of next week's issue could be omitted, as I like to be surprised when I receive each issue. —*Nina A. Sima.*

SUGGESTION

PAWLING, N. Y.—The question of future American air bases in the Pacific, discussed by Michael Degnan, in his article Bases for Future Defense (November 18), must include an all-important island north of Japan which we will require for refueling, weather reports, and repair facilities—Hokkaido.—*James R. Young.*

CONQUER AND DIVIDE

LAUREL, MD.—There have been many suggestions as to what to do with Germany after the war. Many suggest giving certain territory to adjoining countries, but all insist upon the retention of a Germany. To do this would inevitably lead to trouble so long as a Germany existed. She has forfeited her right to live as a nation and I believe the only logical plan would be to abolish Germany once and for all as a nation, dividing her territory among such nations as Poland, Russia, Austria, Hungary, France, Belgium, Holland, Yugoslavia, Denmark, and Rumania. In this way each country would be able to control its German population. The German peopl would have no opportunity to threaten the peace of the world again, and the countrie which have suffered from their ruthless policy of mass murder and destruction would receive some recompense.—*John Ambler Smith.*

WHITEWASHIN' LANA

LONG BEACH, CALIF.—You must think the public is very stupid. In the article Glama Turner (November 18), Shane says that Lana doesn't smoke or drink. I couldn't find a picture of her drinking, but I'm enclosing a swell picture of Miss Turner with a cigarette in her hand.

I smoke myself, but I don't need anyon to whitewash my character. Please, Liberty, don't give us that old stuff.—*An ardent Liberty fan, but a disgusted one, Miss J. S.*

CLEVELAND, OHIO—I have seen several pictures of Lana smoking. What I would like to know is, if she doesn't smoke, then whose cigarette is she always holding?

P.S.: Try and get yourself out of th one.—*Pat Haley.*

Ted Shane says that when he interviewe Miss Turner she was not smoking and had no been smoking for some time. As far as we know, she is not smoking at present, because of the cigarette shortage. Anyhow, it's a woman's privilege to change her mind, isn't it?—VOX POP EDITOR.

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.—I have just finished reading the article Glama Turner by Ted Shane. In this article it said that Lana Turner went to San Francisco Junior High. In the first place, there is no San Francisco Junior High. In the second place, Lana Turner attended Presidio Junior High in San Francisco, where she was twice elected cheer leader.—*Charlott Jacques.*

G. I. GRIPE—JUSTIFIED

c/o POSTMASTER, N. Y.—Whether this is a new gripe or not, I don't know. However, I want to speak my piece on a subject which threatens to ruin my morale for good—overseas radio programs. Alread I've developed a complex which may tak years in a rest camp to overcome.

First, ninety per cent of the radio programs that come in over our receiver are of the canned variety (recordings).

Secondly, ninety per cent of said programs are swing music.

(*Continued on page 8*)

How Never to be Tired

If You Feel Fagged Out Day After Day . . . If "Nervous Exhaustion" Is Running You Ragged . . . If You Haven't the Energy to Really ENJOY Your Work, Your Home, Your Friends . . . Then Let This Wonder-Working Book Give You ENERGY TO BURN in an Amazingly Short Time!

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A New, PROVED Discovery

In this remarkable book, HOW NEVER TO BE TIRED, by M. Beynon Ray, a great medical discovery is revealed to the layman for the first time. This book explains the cause of *your* fatigue and how to overcome destructive emotions, replace them with vitalizing emotions—interest, self-confidence, a passion for work, a better philosophy of life.

The Master Plan given in this book is adapted to *your* life. Only those who know how to stimulate those abundant energies we all possess can reach their goals. Most people who lack energy don't know the *real* causes of their fatigue. They think it is from physical or mental overwork. *This is not so*, and this book shows why.

This Formula Produces Quick Results

One of the most valuable features of HOW NEVER TO BE TIRED is the simple Six-Point Plan it gives you for stimulating energy. The plan can be followed by the busiest executive and the most harried wife.

Once you start using the plan you will no longer be bothered by THAT TIRED FEELING. New energy will start to flow through you, enabling you to tackle tasks with ease and confidence. You will really start to enjoy life.

You, too, may become one of those people of whom others say, "He's a Human Dynamo! He's bound to Succeed!" With boundless Energy and Vitality at your command, you can easily shape your life to get practically anything you want.

How Energy Speeds Your Progress

IS IT BUSINESS SUCCESS THAT YOU WANT? IS IT LOVE AND HOME, SOCIAL POSITION, POWER, HEALTH, OR CULTURE? Then ENERGY will help you get them more quickly than any other single factor.

No matter who you are, the helpful methods outlined in HOW NEVER TO BE TIRED will show you how to conquer fatigue quickly and permanently, create boundless energy and vitality.

Energy for TWO Lifetimes!

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In fact, the first edition of this book was titled *Two Lifetimes in One.* Over 50,000 copies have been sold since, thousands of people helped by it. This new, completely revised, enlarged edition comes right when so many of us are called upon to do more work than we ever thought ourselves capable of doing.

This book explains, in a clear and fascinating way, how you can *double* your energy, *double* the amount of work you do. How you can end each day ready to enjoy your evening, indulge in any strenuous sport, or tackle your favorite hobby with new eagerness.

Examine it FREE for 10 Days

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Simply mail coupon below now, without *money*. HOW NEVER TO BE TIRED will be sent to you to keep *free* for ten days.

Then see how book can stop those energy leaks that keep you constantly tired, rob you of success and joy-of-living. Unless convinced (in even *ten days!*) that this book has already brought you new strength, new energy—return it to us, pay nothing. Otherwise send us only $2.50, plus actual postage. THEN—after *thirty* days longer, if you are not absolutely delighted with results *then* return it, your money will be refunded A DOUBLE-guarantee!

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"Derived real practical help from it, recommend it with enthusiasm. Every tired or nervous man or woman ought to read it."

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"Exceedingly stimulating. It actually generates 'pep,' enthusiasm and greater capacity for living richly."—DR. IRA S. WILE, *Formerly Commissioner of Education, N. Y. City.*

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"A most astonishingly thorough job. I learned a lot from this volume as to conserving energy and making it more effective. With all my heart I recommend the book to anyone who feels he isn't getting the most out of life."—CHANNING POLLOCK, *writer, playwright, lecturer.*

WHAT THESE 332 ENERGY-BUILDING PAGES WILL DO FOR YOU:

This book is for the person who sometimes feels more exhausted in the morning than when he went to bed the night before . . . who feels "too tired," after even a moderate day's work, to go dancing, or visiting, or even to sit quietly through a movie . . . who feels life slipping through his fingers because he lacks the energy to play games whole-heartedly with his own children, or really enjoy sports with his friends and neighbors.

HOW NEVER TO BE TIRED, the *first* and *only* book of its kind ever written, gives you a definite, concise SIX-POINT plan to end, once and for all, that constant feeling of fatigue and nervous exhaustion.

Seven "Personal Enemies" of Energy are making you tired, holding you back, shutting you out from the very things you most desire. They are Boredom—Worry—Fear—Indecision—Inferiority Complex—Over-Emotionalism—Lack of Courage. This book shows you—

How You Can Overcome Devitalizing Emotions

How to Draw on Your Potential Energies

How to Vanquish Boredom and Eliminate Worry

This book is for EVERYONE—man or woman, successful or "marking time." EVERYONE whose life is being only half-lived because of everlasting tiredness. This book was written for YOU!

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HOW NEVER TO BE TIRED
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Please send me in a plain wrapper, for 10 days' FREE EXAMINATION, **How Never To Be Tired**, by M. Beynon Ray.

1. Unless book proves that it can really give me increased energy, I will return it within 10 days, pay nothing. Otherwise I will send you $2.50, plus actual postage, as payment in full.

2. If, after 30 days I am not delighted with results—I may then still return book for full refund.

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(Continued from page 6)

Third, an appalling percentage are o the just-for-you-men-overseas variety.

This just-for-you variety makes me tired. A big-mouthed, smooth-voiced announcer stands in front of a microphone and says, "Here is another program especially designed for all you men in the armed forces. Yes, this is *your* program. *You* picked the songs. *You* picked the stars that are here tonight. It's *your* program." Then the musicians go into a mad riot playing Over There. At least ten times a day we are tortured with that song Over There.

Why do they have to keep throwing it in our faces that we're "over there"? Do they think we don't know where we are? Maybe I don't get around much any more, but I have yet to find a G. I. who doesn't know he is overseas. The rations, the mud, the climate, filthy villages, the boom o artillery, and the many inconveniences are just a few of the little things which remind us we are overseas.

Another factor which is gradually driving me to the rest camp is the female vocalist. Ninety-nine per cent of them sob into the microphone that they "must have their man," and after awhile it becomes most obnoxious.

As much as I like swing music, it b comes boring in time.

I may seem terribly narrow-minded and prejudiced in this letter. Actually I'm not. My earnest desire is that radio announcers and entertainers will please let us forget we're overseas. Let us imagine, when we hear American music and American comedians, that we're not several thousand miles from the land we love. We want to pretend for a few moments that we're home, but if they persist in shouting we're on the fighting fronts all over the world—well, rest camp, here I come!—*Pvt. J. B. C.*

HEROES' SWEETHEARTS

LOS ANGELES, CALIF.—"Sweetheart of the 92d" (November 25 Vox Pop) said a mouthful when she called the Seabees the "unsung heroes of the war."—*Sweetheart of a 33d.*

BILLY CRANE, THE CIVIL WAR, AND OTHER BATTLE FRONTS

CHATTANOOGA, TENN.—As a member o the Junior Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, I was interested in what was said about Walter White's article How Will the Negro Vote? (October 21).

In your December 2 Vox Pop, Billy Crane said that it is possible to buy the vote of an Arkansas Negro for as little as a nickel soda pop. In some cases that is true, but not so for all, or nearly all, o our people. There was a time when the Negroes did not give so much thought to political views because they were so often told things that were never done. They didn't know how important it was for them to vote. But now things are a great deal clearer to the average Negro and he is n only voting but voting wisely. In every race there are some people who have no regard for the political standards of their country, so why emphasize certain Southern Negroes? The whole race should not be branded as ignorant, nonchalant, and disloyal because of a few.—*Luvenia Roach.*

BOSTON, MASS.—I would like to inform Mr. Billy Crane of Arkansas that all men are created equal, and they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

He does not realize that God could have created him an Eskimo or a cannibal as well as an American.

It doesn't make any difference on the battlefield whether you are black or white, you're an American, and that is what counts.

Mr. Crane, the Civil War is over and the Negroes are free.—*Dorothy Smith.*

NEW BEDFORD, MASS.—After reading your time-wasting letter, Mr. Billy Crane, I've come to one conclusion: You must be under Army age limits. If this is true, remember children should be seen and not heard. If not, then you should be thankful that there are Negroes to do your fighting for you. In appreciation for this you should fight for their right to vote; in fact give those Negro vets your place in line at the voting polls. I happen to belong to the white race.—*H. Eyrich.*

AUTHOR, AUTHOR!

INDIANAPOLIS, IND.—It is a shame that every American cannot read your condensation of the book America, by Stephen Vincent Benét (December 2). It is superb; it should make every American glad and proud he has the opportunity of living here, free from oppression.

More of it. Please!—*Wm. A. Frise.*

THE GROANER, THE VOICE—AND NOW THE LOVER!

SOMEWHERE IN NEW GUINEA—This is an open letter to Mr. Louis Peelor of Castle Heights Military Academy, Lebanon, Tennessee, who extolled his own voice in Vox Pop (September 16): It was so good to read your modest confession of your singing ability. I would like to know what size hat you wear. If there is anything that we appreciate, it is a modest person. I'll bet you are a handsome brute to boot. You must be six foot, with wavy hair, and have the most soulful eyes!

Perhaps your article was intended to draw a few rebukes from Frank's fans. If so, you have succeeded, for we think Frank is tops, along with Bing. The boys over here appreciate good music and enjoy the way Frank puts a song across.

It is too bad you don't have a conscience, for if you did, you would never have written such nonsense. I wish you could put in some time with us over here. I assure you, Lover, that the unnatural swelling of your head would shrink to a

(*Continued on page 10*)

How to fight a cold

HERE'S WHAT TO DO in addition to any temporary relief measures. These 5 steps actually help your system throw off a cold.

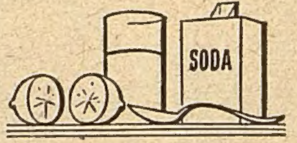
	5 BASIC STEPS ADVISED BY PHYSICIANS	LEMONS HELP WITH ALL 5
1	**Get plenty of rest; overcome fatigue; build resistance.**	Lemons are among the richest known sources of vitamin C, which *combats fatigue* and *fights infection.*
2	**Alkalinize your system.**	Lemon juice with water and baking soda forms *sodium citrate,* an excellent alkalinizer.
3	**Insure regular elimination.**	Lemon juice and water, with or without soda, is mildly laxative for most people.
4	**Eat lightly. Take plenty of liquids, especially citrus juices.**	Fresh lemon drinks are favorites.
5	**Keep warm; avoid further chill. If cold persists, see your doctor.**	Hot lemonade is almost universally prescribed.

TRY THIS NEW COLD ROUTINE WITH LEMON AND SODA

At first sign of a cold drink a glass of lemon and soda. Take another every 3 or 4 hours.

To induce perspiration, take a hot lemonade when you go to bed.

Lemon and soda forms natural *sodium citrate.* Supplies vitamins and all other benefits of fresh lemon juice, plus an increased alkalinizing effect. Consumed at once, soda does not appreciably reduce vitamin content.



To make lemon & soda pour juice of 1 lemon in a half glass of water. Add — slowly — half teaspoon baking soda (bicarbonate). Drink as foaming quiets.

To avoid colds build your resistance! Join the millions who now drink lemon and water daily. Juice of 1 lemon in glass of plain water, *first thing on arising.*

WHEN YOU TAKE COLD TAKE LEMONS

California Sunkist Lemons

LET'S FINISH THE JOB—BUY WAR BONDS

Satisfying

COOL—
CLEAN—
SWEET—

—This is why the KIRSTEN is a really *satisfying* pipe. There's no bitter "back-bite" from this scientifically designed pipe!—Irritating tars, oils and moisture are trapped in the big radiator, leaving only the full flavor of tobacco.

Kirsten Pipes Going Overseas
Our current pipe production has been requisitioned for Army and Navy fighting men overseas, which means a delay before we can furnish Kirsten pipes to dealers in this country. We hope it will not be long before our pipes will be available to home folks.

★

Keep on Buying War Bonds

KIRSTEN PIPE CO.
Dept. 18
Seattle 1
Wash.

THE Kirsten "RADIATOR" PIPE
PATS. & PATS. PEND.

Make Martinis with Rum

Make them Better with

RONRICO*

Best RUM bar none*

The Rum Connoisseur contains over 100 tested drink and food recipes. Send for your Free Copy. Ronrico Corporation, Miami, Florida. Ronrico Rum 86, 90 and 151 Proof. U. S. Representative: Import Division, McKesson & Robbins, Inc., New York City.

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WHITE LABEL
RONRICO
Finest Quality
Distilled PUERTO RICAN RUM

(Continued from page 9)

natural swelling (maybe from a hit on the head!).

By the time you get out of your academy, you will be just a laughing memory. That is, if you continue to write such tales.

I believe that covers all I have to say, for myself and buddies, so I suggest that you *wise up, Junior.—Disgustedly, the Bully Beef Quints, S/Sgt. Stan Fedyk, Pfc. Dennis Powell, Pfc. Bill Carpenter, Pvt. Alton Brimhall, Pvt. Bill Eastburn.*

BEACHHEAD

FORT PIERCE, FLA.—I have just read the story Invasion! by Charles Christian Wertenbaker (November 25). My shipmates and I think it is the best story of the Normandy beachhead yet printed. Incidentally, the painting on pages 34 and 35 by Lt. Dwight C. Shepler, U. S. N. R., is an exact and excellent picture of the beach we hit. Brother, it was plenty hot!—*F. X. Darcy, CCM.*

JUNIOR CRASHES THROUGH

BELLFLOWER, CALIF.—I have just finished reading The Phase That Launched a Thousand Drips, by Alwyn W. Knight (November 25), and I think it was more true to life than any story I've ever read about youngsters of today. The illustrations were swell. Thanks for printing it.—*Mrs. A. Heyer.*

ALL'S FAIR IN WAR?

LOS ANGELES, CALIF.—What about the merchant marine? Don't the people of these United States think the merchant seaman is entitled to gas rations when he's on leave?

My shipmate and I just arrived back in the States late in November on leave, and we were told that members of the merchant marine are not entitled to "leave" gas.

Incidentally, I sail on nothing but tankers.—*D. C. H.*

A BETTER AMERICA

MEMPHIS, TENN.—I am a colored woman of the Deep South. Also a constant reader of Liberty. I just finished reading the letter titled Practicing What We Preach, by Mrs. Dorothy Elizabeth Albert, Summit, New Jersey (December 2 Vox Pop). It was very fine reading. If we had more thinking white people like Mrs. Albert this would be a better America for the Negro to live in. Our men would feel that they had something to fight for.

The white people of the South have always wanted the Negro to feel inferior. In reality we all are "inferior" in the sight of God. In every walk of life the Negro has to take the back seat. But remember there's no back seat on the battle front.—*Mrs. C. S.*

PATIENCE, LADY

SPRINGFIELD, PA.—Will you kindly advise me if Ted Shane still publishes Cockeyed Crossword puzzles in book form? I enjoy them so much I can hardly wait from week to week to buy Liberty.—*Mrs. Margaret W. Gipp.*

There haven't been any Shane crossword books for a number of years, but perhaps after the war, when paper restrictions are relaxed, there will be some more of them.—VOX POP EDITOR.

Liberty
THE VETERAN COMES BACK
DESTITUTE ITALY—An Unsolved Problem

NEXT WEEK

✓ **THE VETERAN COMES BACK**

By Willard Waller

Liberty's Book Condensation

We must start planning now—in every town and hamlet in the country—to assure a decent place in our world for the men who are fighting to save it.

Mr. Waller, a veteran of the last war, and now an associate professor of sociology at Columbia, is no idle theorist. He deals with facts—facts of urgent importance and compelling interest to every American.

✓ **DESTITUTE ITALY—AN UNSOLVED PROBLEM**

By Gretta Palmer

A reporter inquires into Italy under Allied Military Government, and finds hunger, homelessness, humiliation, and hate. How much of this is our fault?

✓ **REINDEER ROUND-UP**

By Russell Annabel

Fighting wolves and weather, tough Eskimo herders deliver reindeer meat to the Army in Alaska, hundreds of tons at a time. And all because of one man's foresight in 1892!

✓ **BREAKFAST FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

By Ray Mackland

Favorite morning newspaper reading of many Washingtonians is columnist Mary Haworth's "voice of certitude" on difficult fathers, seductive mothers, double-dealing daughters, philandering husbands, and baby-fearing wives.

✓ **THE TOUGHEST MOP-UP IS AHEAD**

By Morris Markey

Half a million Japs on by-passed islands are doing nicely, thank you. And unless they're dug out and destroyed, they'll dominate the Pacific even after Japan is defeated!

✓ **WORLD BUREAU OF MISSING PERSONS**

By Ruth Moore

Children stranded by war are rescued; families broken by invasion are reunited. It's the work of the International Migration Service, lost-and-found bureau for humanity, whose busiest days are just ahead.

✓ **FACE IN THE DARK**

By Hugh Pentecost

Max Chandler knows dirty work when he sees it—even when on vacation. At a lonely mountain inn he spots a seeming accident as murder, and then uncover an international intrigue!

You'll win friends faster if you have a good disposition ...

Good-natured people attract others simply because of the contagious good will they radiate. To win friends faster, let others see what a good disposition you have. Get in the habit of smiling.

"Fresh up"-keep smiling!

7up
7up
REG. U.S. PAT. OFF.

A great self-starter for a happy mood is sparkling, lively 7-Up. Sip it slowly . . . taste it . . . let it roll over and under your tongue. It's a chipper drink with a chipper freshness that leaves your mouth feeling clean and wide-awake. With each chilled sip, your spirits liven. You "fresh up". You feel like smiling!

To get a "fresh up" just look for the nearest store displaying a 7-Up sign. And while you're there, order a case of 7-Up for your home. Remember—everyone of every age likes 7-Up and 7-Up likes everyone.

7up
7up LIKES YOU

Order a case from your dealer

Copyright 1945 by The Seven-Up Company

You like it ... it likes you

for
Quick
Nourishing
Lunches

HEINZ
Condensed
CREAM OF
TOMATO
SOUP
57 VARIETIES
MANUFACTURED IN U.S.A. BY
H.J. HEINZ CO., PITTSBURGH, PA.
57

try
Heinz
Condensed
Cream of
Tomato
Soup
made the old-time
small-batch way,
rich in energy
and flavor

LOCKHEED SATURN

A new type of plane for a new transportation field, Lockheed's Saturn 75 is designed to make air-line travel available to many small-town residents.

ON THE BEAM

BY WAYNE PARRISH

Designs for Postwar Flight

Although the war is far from being over, the aircraft manufacturers are announcing their postwar wares to the public and to the air-transport industry. This doesn't mean that the manufacturers are actually producing these postwar models, or are even in a position to start producing them in the near future. But airplanes are not like most consumers' goods—they are sold chiefly in advance and are built to order. For this reason the manufacturers announce their plans and designs earlier than would be necessary in other lines of business. It is a long way from the design stage to the finished product.

Several noteworthy plans have been announced within recent weeks and are getting more than the usual amount of comment and consideration in industry circles. The reason is that one of these designs, by Boeing, is a super-duper model based on the Superfortress B-29, and another is a feeder air-line plane which Lockheed feels is the long-sought answer to small operators' needs.

Super-Superfortress Transport

We've been telling you for a long time now on this page that postwar transport planes are going to be "bigger and better." The projected two-deck Model 377, seating from seventy-two to 100 passengers, would seem to lack nothing in the way of size and speed.

The big Boeing is actually twelve feet longer than the famed Superfortress, and has twice its interior volume. Boeing says it will have a direct operating cost of one cent a passenger mile, which should be heartening to travelers who would like to take long vacation trips by air. All manufacturers are prone to put their products in the best possible light, so when Boeing says its new transport will cruise at 340 miles an hour, one is likely to discount such a claim, for that's a terrific speed for passenger planes in anyone's language. But Boeing is probably not exaggerating; if the Superfortress is doing what the Air Forces well know it *is* doing, then a transport equivalent at 340 miles an hour isn't much out of line.

You'd Certainly Get Around

Have you divided 340 miles an hour into distances that are familiar to you? Your New York-San Francisco trip would require less than eight flying hours. New York-Chicago would be little more than two hours, nonstop. San Francisco-Sydney would be less than twenty-four flying hours. You'll probably agree that a mere 300 miles an hour would be fast enough for you. Remember that the average speed of transport planes flying in the United States today is not more than 170 miles an hour.

The power plant of the new Boeing is something to wonder about. It will have four engines of 2,800 rated horsepower each, with 3,500 horsepower at take-off. That's eight times as much power as you now find in today's commercial transport.

Operating range is listed as 3,500 miles, which means that New York to London could be flown nonstop with plenty of fuel for reserve. The plane would have a pressurized cabin so that even when the plane is flying at 30,000 feet the inside pressure would remain the equivalent of 8,000 feet. Gross weight (this means the weight of the plane fully loaded with fuel, passengers, and cargo) is 130,000 pounds, and the wing span is a mere 141 feet 3 inches!

Inside there will be three large cabins

which would seat 100 passengers for daytime flights, or be arranged with berths to accommodate seventy-two passengers. An observation lounge with comfortable seats and a cocktail bar has been provided for on the lower deck. It all sounds pretty good, and Boeing is actually building some cargo models for the military service, so it isn't one of those nebulous dream planes that are a long way off.

For Shorter Flights, Low-Cost

All air travel isn't going to be over long distances, however, and we shouldn't forget the traveler who wants to fly seventy-five or 150 miles. This is where Lockheed Aircraft comes in with its projected fourteen-passenger Saturn 75. It's to be built for feeder air lines and for industrial corporations that want executive air liners for their own use. It can be fitted up with fourteen seats for commercial operations, or it can be fitted up luxuriously as a lounge car for large companies or wealthy individuals who want their own air buggies.

The Saturn will have a tricycle landing gear, be able to land and take off on small airfields, be able to climb very fast and land at a relatively slow speed of seventy-five miles an hour and to cruise at about 200 miles an hour. Gross weight is 13,500 pounds. The power will be supplied by two Continental-built Wright engines of nine-cylinder, air-cooled design which develop 525 horsepower each for take-off. The Saturn is being designed for low-cost operation.

There won't be any lack of new airplanes when the war ends.

The Gal's Got Stamina!

Here's something new in a record. The Flying Fortress Edna Pat flew the equivalent of more than ten trips around the world in 1,314 hours of operation without an engine overhaul.

This is like an automobile traveling at sixty miles an hour for 260,000 miles without having its cylinder head removed for the customary valve, piston ring, and bearing jobs. The previous engine operation record was 1,274 hours.

Captain J. P. Howard was the pilot on the last flight from Drew Field, Florida, to Shreveport, Louisiana, and back to Drew Field. The Edna Pat is named for the wife of Technical Sergeant Harold Temme, flight chief of the crew. The engines are Wright Cyclone 9s.

Higher-and-Higher Education

College students of the future will be up in the air a great deal.

Results of a nation-wide survey of higher educational institutions show that out of 455 American colleges and universities which replied, 307 are making plans for giving postwar instruction courses in aviation, Bendix Aviation Corporation has disclosed.

Educators of these 307 schools said they will want and need substantial quantities of usable government-owned aircraft equipment which can be made available to them under the surplus disposal law.

The subject of turning aircraft surpluses into education assets becomes increasingly important, with responses to the survey showing that 237 colleges now teach some aspects of aviation, that 212 of these schools are definitely planning to continue or expand their curricula after the war, and that ninety-five additional schools among 140 colleges which do not now teach aeronautics plan to form postwar courses.

Kraut von Kluge's Phone-Crawls

Intercepted telephone messages from German Field Marshal von Kluge to Wehrmacht generals explained why the jig was up for the German Seventh Army in France. The reason was the strength of Allied air power.

To General Warlimont, Hitler's personal representative in the west, von Kluge reported:

"The enemy air superiority is terrific and smothers almost every one of our movements. Every movement of the enemy, however, is prepared and protected by its air force. Losses in men and equipment are extraordinary."

To the chief of staff, he phoned:

"Yesterday's heavy fighting was successful for the enemy only because he paralyzed all of our movements by employing fighter-bombers on an unprecedented scale."

The Germans tried all kinds of stratagems to defeat the fighter-bombers, but failed. Some of their methods were as clumsy as spies with false beards.

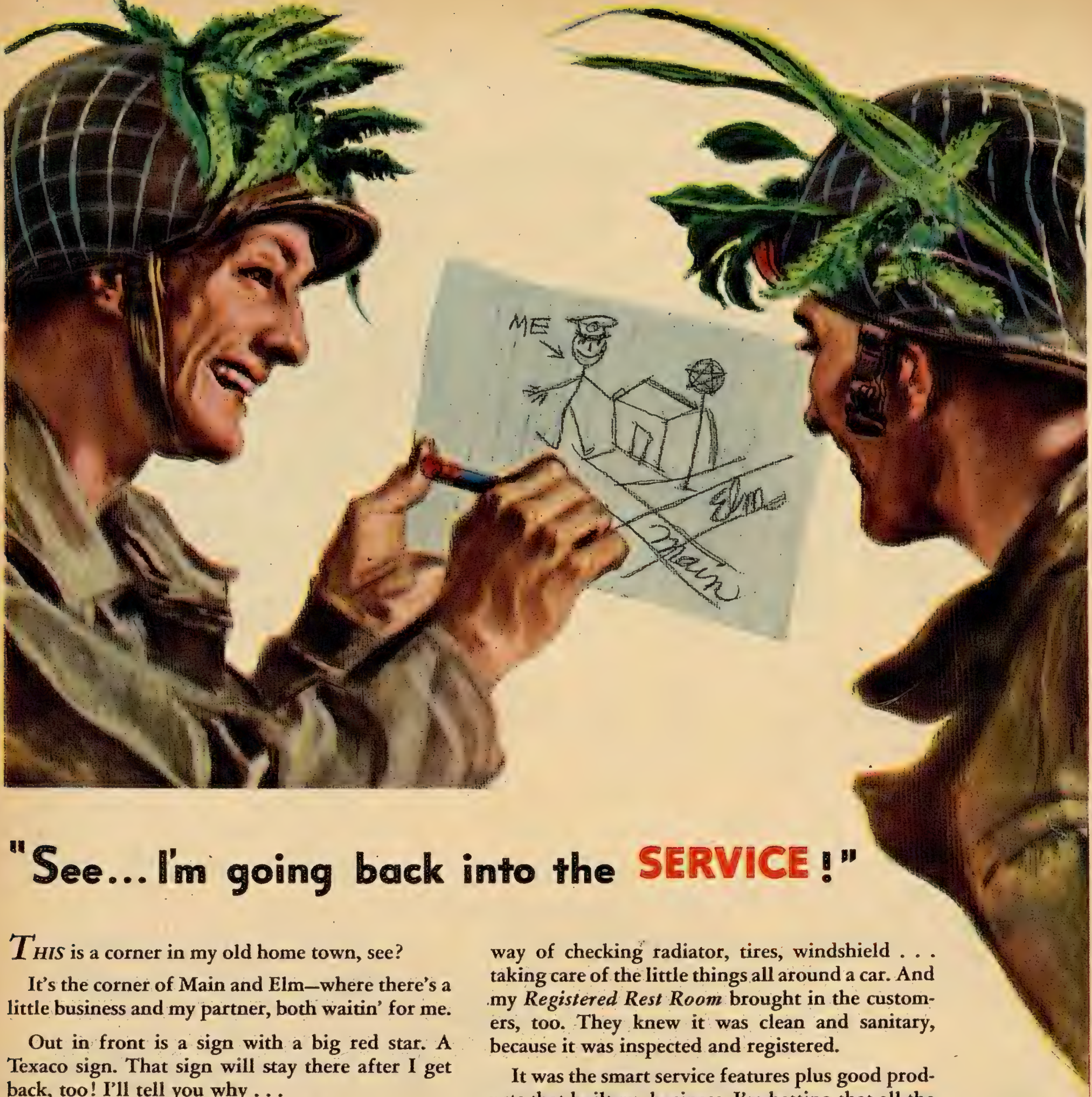
Over an officers' tent at a Thunderbolt base close to the front hangs a sign which says:

"Through these portals pass the best damn strafers who ever made a kraut general crawl through hedgerows."

G. I. Laundry Takes Wing

An air-borne laundry unit, adapted to the island-hopping tactics of the South Pacific war, has been developed by the Army to take the laundry to the wash. The 2,500-pound laundry, easily transported by plane, has a capacity of forty pounds of clothes an hour and will serve as many as 600 men.

Men, tough beard doesn't mean a thing—
You ease it off—no smart or sting—
Save time and dough, look well-groomed, too
With Thin Gillette, the blade for you!
THIN Gillette BLADES
Gillette
4 BLADES 10¢
4 for 10¢
Top quality at rock-bottom price
Produced by the Maker of the Famous Gillette Blue Blade



"See... I'm going back into the SERVICE!"

THIS is a corner in my old home town, see?

It's the corner of Main and Elm—where there's a little business and my partner, both waitin' for me.

Out in front is a sign with a big red star. A Texaco sign. That sign will stay there after I get back, too! I'll tell you why . . .

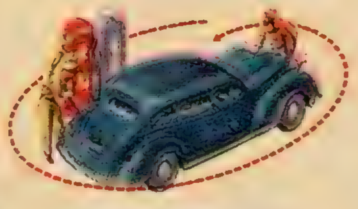
As a Texaco Dealer back before the war, I always had a swell string of special service features to offer. *Circle Service* was one—a quick, organized way of checking radiator, tires, windshield . . . taking care of the little things all around a car. And my *Registered Rest Room* brought in the customers, too. They knew it was clean and sanitary, because it was inspected and registered.

It was the smart service features plus good products that built my business. I'm betting that all the Texaco guys will be back after the war with the same swell angles—and some smart new ones, too. Including *me!*

THE TEXAS COMPANY

A great postwar line-up

Registered Rest Rooms—Inspected, registered, really clean!



Circle Service—Quick, systematic service all 'round the car!

FIRE CHIEF GASOLINE

Fire-Chief Gasoline—Wartime research will make it better than ever!

Sky Chief Gasoline—For those who want the finest for post-war driving!

TEXACO MOTOR OIL

Insulated Havoline and Insulated Texaco Motor Oils

Let us
MARFAK
your car

Marfak—Chassis lubricant especially made to stick to the job!

TEXACO

REG. T. M.

You're welcome at

TEXACO DEALERS

TUNE IN . . . Texaco Star Theatre every Sunday night starring James Melton. Complete Metropolitan Opera broadcasts every Saturday afternoon. See newspapers for time and stations.

Liberty
THE MAGAZINE OF A FREE PEOPLE

The Mongolian People's Republic, permanent ally of the U. S. S. R., possesses a strong modern army, of which these parachutists are typical.

Russia Holds Trumps Against Japan

BY WILLIAM van NARVIG

> There's a short cut to Japan. It's ideal for a great mechanized army. Will Russia make use of it? When — and how?

DO Russians like the Japanese? Definitely not. All through Asiatic Russia, from Vladivostok to the fertile steppes of Kazakstan, there is not a Russian who would not enjoy seeing the Japs chased back to their native isles and bottled up there.

In the railroad station of Irkutsk in Siberia stood a freight train, some of its flatcars loaded with self-propelled guns. When departure time came, the train moved eastward; not toward the fighting fronts in the west. An assistant stationmaster stood on the platform watching the train pull out. "One would think these guns would be sent against the enemy," I remarked.

"They are," he replied curtly.

The Russians have strong reasons for this attitude toward Japan. For thirteen long years, ever since Japan grabbed Manchuria in 1932, with Russia having to stand by impotently, they have known that the day of reckoning will come. The peoples of Asiatic Russia, accustomed to local self-rule under the Soviet regime, view with outspoken dislike the ruthless enslavement of neighboring peoples by their Japanese overlords. Moreover, the Russians understand only too well that the Japanese conquests in east Asia are merely a preliminary in the Nipponese scheme of things—a building-up of strength with which to pounce upon Siberia and add its natural riches to the immense loot already garnered by the self-styled Asiatic master race.

Siberia is the Russians' land of the future, the cornerstone of their own evolution into one of the world's great nations. They will go to any length to protect it and keep it as the heritage of generations yet unborn.

Russians from all the walks of life are keenly disappointed in the showing of the United States in her three years of war against Japan. They know about America's great industrial might, for they are bending every effort to emulate it. When told about the great difficulties of conducting a naval and amphibious war over vast oceanic distances, they profess not to understand.

A shop foreman in Irkutsk said, "You are reported to have a Navy three times the size of the Japanese fleet. Why doesn't your fleet blast the Japanese Navy to smithereens and open a way for your armies to land on the south China coast?"

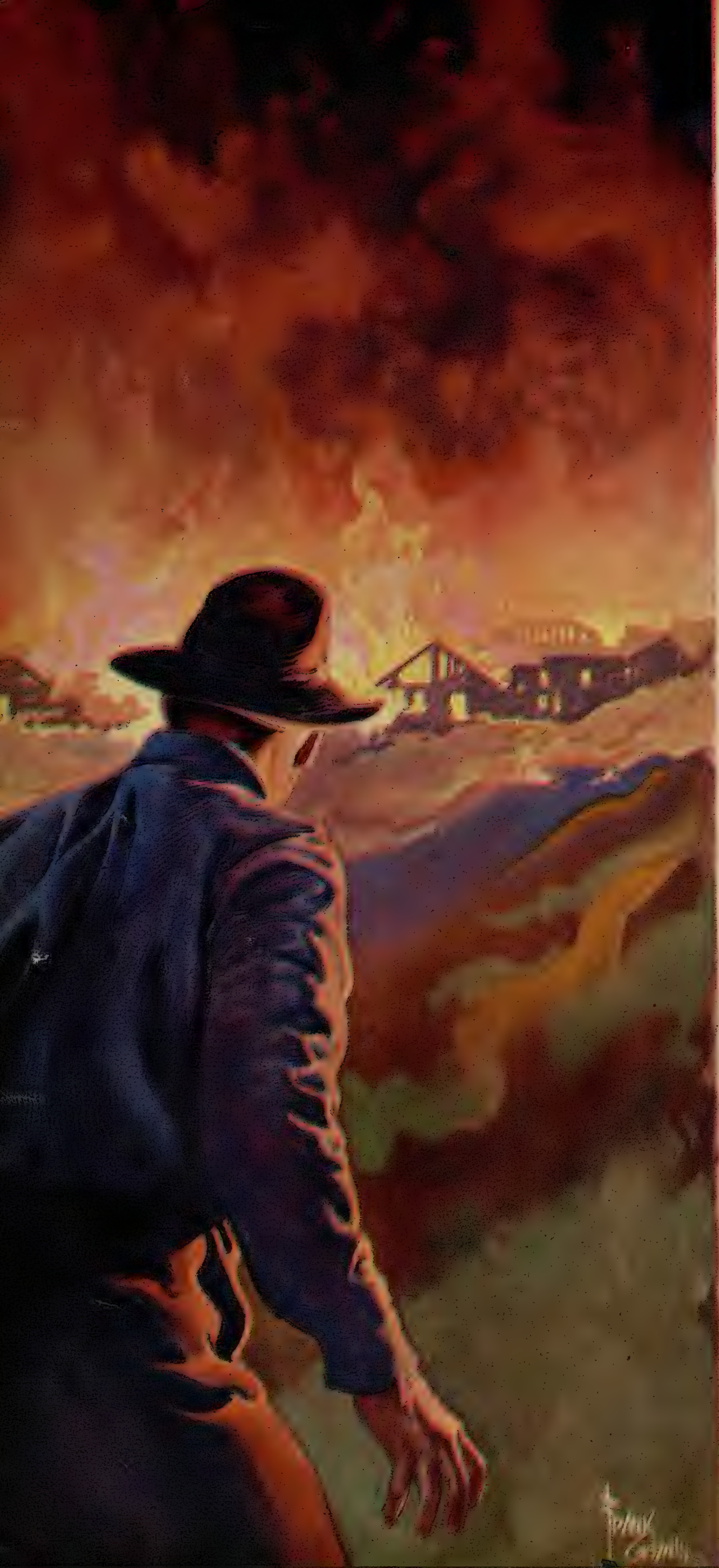
It is symptomatic of the Russian way of thinking that they do not envisage an American conquest of the Japanese islands. These are the native land of the Japs, and there they belong. But for the good of the whole world the Japs must be driven out of their continental holdings.

The foreman is offered an explanation. From the Pacific coast of the United States to the Philippines is a distance of some 6,000 miles. This tremendous ocean lap was studded with Jap-held island strongholds which had to be seized or rendered harmless. Even with the Philippines reconquered, there still is a distance of 650 miles from Manila to Hong Kong. And once Hong Kong is reached, there remains an overland route of 800 miles to Shanghai, a mountainous terrain so difficult that even the Japs have not ventured to cover it.

At this point the foreman nods sagely. Continental war is what he understands. Then he grins knowingly and says, "We know a short cut."

It was the hint of this short cut which led us to Ulan Bator Khoto, capital of Outer Mongolia. The Mongolian People's Republic, as Outer Mongolia is now called by its inhabitants, is a permanent ally of

(Continued on page 72)



The sky was suddenly spattered with color and he stood rooted, until the idea formed and the word made sense in his mind: Fire.

Martha loved her husband enough to pull up stakes and share his restless roving, but in her heart was always a longing to strike root and call some place "home"

ED MASON never knew just when it was he began to run. He remembered standing on the edge of the road looking toward the lights of the plant that sprawled across the dry earth of the Nevada desert; beyond, just where the road began to rise slightly as it crossed toward the black hills that rimmed the valley, they were building the houses and, knowing they were there, he thought, I've got to get out, I've got to get out.

That was what he remembered best, the urgency of the thought, sharp and insistent as a prod; and he cursed the place then, the plant he had helped to build, the flat tan of the earth, and the sun, always the sun, naked as torchlight in the daytime sky. He looked upward, eastward, where tomorrow with the dawn the sun would come again, and he thought once more, We're getting out.

Then, even as he watched, the sky exploded. One moment it was flat, glowing with the cold distant light of the stars, and then abruptly it was a writhing mass of red. Rising pillarlike from the earth, a column of flame shot up, rolling in jagged crests. It bore against the sky in a broken crescent shape, spired in Gothic arches, gaseous and red, like an enormous stained-glass window lit by a sunset sky.

He heard himself shout once, and then he was running toward the fire across the parking area that lay between the road and the plant. He tried to orient himself in the familiar landscape gone so suddenly strange. The cars in the parking lot were rosy-toned, hued with the light of the fire. His foot slashed into the curling edge of a bumper. He stopped then and someone behind him, still running, grabbed his arm and cried, "Come on!" But he didn't move, trying to remember the layout of the plant and where the fire hoses were; there were pumps out in front of the time office. Then he began to run again.

They were laying out hose when he got there. A short square-shouldered figure was bent over the pump, his face red in the flamelight: Thompson, the plant safety engineer. "Twist it on, damn it," he was saying. "Twist it."

"Thompson."

The man still bent over the pump: "Who the hell are you?"

"Mason. Ed Mason."

Thompson straightened up. "Got it on? Good. Try it at the nozzle. Then he turned to Ed. "Mason? Have they got the other hose out?"

Thompson began to trot, cursing to himself, and Ed followed after him. At the second pump Thompson lunged at the valves with a wrench. They had a length of hose out. Ed bent to the pump, took the

Fire on the Desert

BY ZACHARY GOLD

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK GODWIN

end of the hose. He screwed it onto the valve outlet.

"Get down to the nozzle!" Thompson shouted. "I want those streams playing together."

Ed pushed through to the fore end. He grabbed the nozzle from the hands of a dark mustached man who kept shouting, "Higher! Higher!" Ed wrested the nozzle from his grasp, and the man was suddenly aware of him and said viciously, "What the hell do you think you're doing?" Ed didn't answer. He dragged the straggling hose, pulling it over to the other crew. The whole building in front of him was now in flames.

Behind him he could hear the murmur of a growing crowd, the sound of feet pounding over the gravel. A girl broke out of the crowd, running in front of the hoses, shouting to someone. In the moment of her passing, Ed recognized her.

Suddenly then, completely, the fact of the fire bore in on him and he stared down in immense surprise at the stream of water that swished out of the nozzle of the hose. An hour ago he had been ready to pull out, quit, leave the plant and the desert, the sand and the sun. Vaguely he recalled the girl and how she had gone, almost running, out of the door of his trailer.

THE girl had been talking about a house. He found them in the trailer when he came home that night, the three of them—the girl, whose name he never learned, and Martha and Judith. The girl was talking very rapidly, her hands sorting a series of pamphlets and brochures spread on the kitchen table. Martha saw him first and she stood up and said, "Ed—" The girl stopped for a moment and smiled at him and then began to talk again.

"What house?" Ed said. "What house are you talking about?"

"I brought the plans," the girl said. "I knew you'd be interested. It's going to be something very nice, a new city—"

"No," Ed said. "We're not interested."

She should have known then something was wrong and stopped talking, but she was young and very bright and she had never heard of silence in salesmanship, and she said, a little puzzled, "But the deposit?"

"What deposit?" Ed said.

"There's a deposit on the house, of course," she said; and then suddenly she stopped, knowing it was already too late, while Ed turned away from her slowly and looked at Martha. The girl glanced at the door quickly. "Of course," she said, "you can—"

Ed said heavily, "We don't want the house. Do you understand that? That isn't hard to follow, is it? We don't want the house."

"Yes, I understand," the girl said quickly. "But about the deposit—"

Ed said, "We don't want the house."

"Very well," the girl said. "Only—"

"Take your papers," Ed said. "Don't forget your papers."

The girl rose, gathering the papers up hastily. "Then you'll be in," she said, tumbling the words out. "About the release, the deposit? Tomorrow? Or sometime soon?"

"Yes," Ed said.

She fled. She brushed by Judith in the doorway of the trailer and she looked up and nodded very briefly, almost apologetically; and then she was gone.

IN the narrow kitchen of the trailer, Ed looked at the two women: Martha, the quiet Martha, who was his wife; and Judith, who was his daughter. He could feel the tense edge of the silence and he thought hopelessly: *They don't understand.* He wished then that Tom were there, not in the Army; or even little Dodie who, of them all, was most his child. He felt alone; and angry that here, beneath his own roof, he should ever feel alone, defenseless, and at bay.

He turned to Martha: "If you wanted something," he said, "why didn't you tell me?"

"I meant to tell you," Martha said. "I was going to."

"When?" he said harshly; and then: "Is there anything else?"

"No," Martha said evenly. "It was just the house."

"Good," he said. Judith was still in the doorway, standing silently. "Did you know, Jude," Ed said, "we've been in the real-estate business on the side?"

Judith said, watching Martha, "No, I didn't know."

"No one knew," Martha said. "Only Tom."

"Tom?" Ed said. "What did he have to do with it?"

"It was Tom's money on the deposit."

Ed said, "Were you afraid to ask me?"

"No," Martha said. "It was just—"

"Just what?" he said. "Just what?"

Judith crossed over to Martha, and she said, "Let her talk, at least."

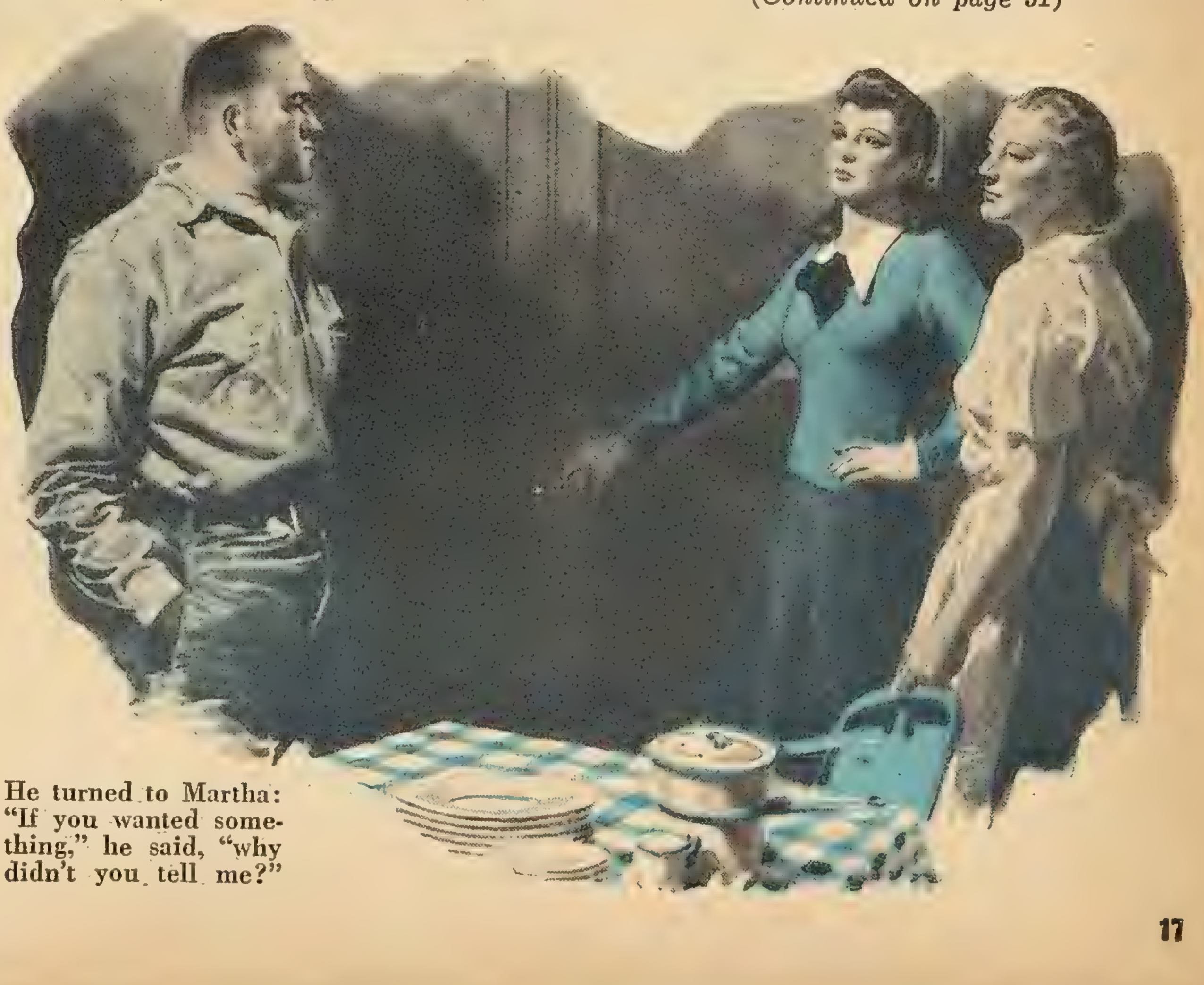
Outside the narrow trailer windows the late sun hung fat and slack in the sky and the huge shadows of the coming night ran down the sheer black hills. In that light, harsh, rainbow-tinted, the world shriveled; it lay hushed. The land stretched flat to the horizon like the bed of some ancient river cutting between the upheaved masses of rock that were mountains.

Once, in the beginning—before the houses, before there had been anything, almost, but dead earth, sky, and sun—he'd liked the look of the land, the raw bite of it and the challenge. He had come down in the first days, when war came, and the word went out they were building a plant in the desert and needed men. Well, they'd built it, concrete and corrugated-iron walls, gaunt against the sky, the triumphant thumbprint of man. Now it was done and he was beginning to feel the old restlessness, and he heard talk of the Northwest and the shipyards, and he wondered how they were and what the country was like up there.

There was a patch of smoke rising from the plant and he watched it belly over the flat somnolence of the desert as he waited for Martha to speak. But she was still silent, and he said slowly, "Well?"

"It was just that we were out that day,

(Continued on page 51)



He turned to Martha: "If you wanted something," he said, "why didn't you tell me?"

WHOSE BOOM?

BY DARRELL HUFF

We're earning and saving more money than anybody ever did before—but what are we going to do with it? And exactly who is "we"?

"WHO'S got all the money?" is a question generating considerable heat right now. The answer always is: Somebody else. I know an advertising man who has made dozens of speeches in war-bond drives, and he has yet to find an audience which believes its group is a major beneficiary of wartime prosperity.

It is a prime topic for argument, and the argument is by no means confined to back room and street corner. The economists are in it, too, and the unions and the employers' organizations are hurling their divergent views at one another. At times you'd hardly know it was the same country they're all talking about.

The debaters are ever ready to back up their generalizations by citing cases. The cases are usually true—though they may not be typical and they may not mean what they seem to mean. As in the silk-shirt days of the last war, there are plenty of tales afloat now with which to horrify the thrifty. In Des Moines a department-store clerk regales her friends with the Case of the Woman War Worker:

"She was not very young and not very slim and she asked to see our slacks. I showed her our most popular lines, but they wouldn't do. 'Didn't we have anything better?'

"'Only tailored wool ones at seventeen fifty,' I told her. And she looked at them and said O. K., she'd take half a dozen.

"I thought I'd heard wrong, but no. She needed a good supply, she said, since she'd be wearing them to work six days a week!"

For every business man who gleefully picks up and retails a yarn like that, there's a voice from labor to denounce the aircraft corporation which the Truman Committee found to be earning one hundred times as much now as it was making a few years ago—and that phenomenal increase is calculated *after* taxes and renegotiation.

And the white-collar man, squeezed between a small fixed salary and living costs which are neither small nor fixed, is likely to point with equal bitterness at a couple of other people. There's the girl next door who studied welding for a few months and now, only a year out of high school, earns $68.50 a week (more when she's on the graveyard shift). There's the executive whose war-swollen company has for several years been paying him $100,000 a year—three times the salary he collected in 1939.

Each fact, each instance, is undeniable, but an honest look at the circumstances can wipe out most of the bitterness. Wages in war work have averaged higher than in other jobs—but this was encouraged by the government in order to lure men and women into employment where they were badly needed, work which may be both temporary and arduous.

A corporation which earns a hundred times what it did a few years ago and shows a profit of 100 per cent or more a year on its invested capital sounds like a profiteer of the most flagrant sort. Yet those earnings may constitute only 1 or 2 per cent of its sales, and its efficiency may be saving the taxpayers millions of dollars a year.

The economists, analysts, politicians, commentators, and propagandists—amateur and professional—have variously proved that the big wartime dough is going to unskilled workers, skilled workers, investors, big business, farmers, women welders, dentists, union officials, vitamin manufacturers, oil producers, railroads—everybody.

It is an unfortunate fact that the statistics the special pleaders are shoving around so recklessly not only promote bitterness but also throw a haze around information on which our national prosperity may be based in the postwar years.

So let's take a critical look at this blood-won boom of ours. Whose prosperity is it?

The outlines of the boom are sketched by the figures on national income. In 1939, the last year before "defense" work began to swell our income, it was just under 71 billion dollars. Preliminary figures for 1944 indicate that the year's total was about 158 billion dollars, an increase of 122 per cent. In five years our national income has more than doubled.

Take a look at the meaning of that increase in national income—87 billion dollars. Divide it equally among the men, women, and children of this country and each comes out with some $620. But is this excess 87 billion dollars being divided equally? Who's getting it?

The answer is: Most of the people in each economic group. But that is a statement requiring some hedging.

Farm owners' profits have tripled since 1939. (But 1939 was a pretty threadbare year for agriculture.)

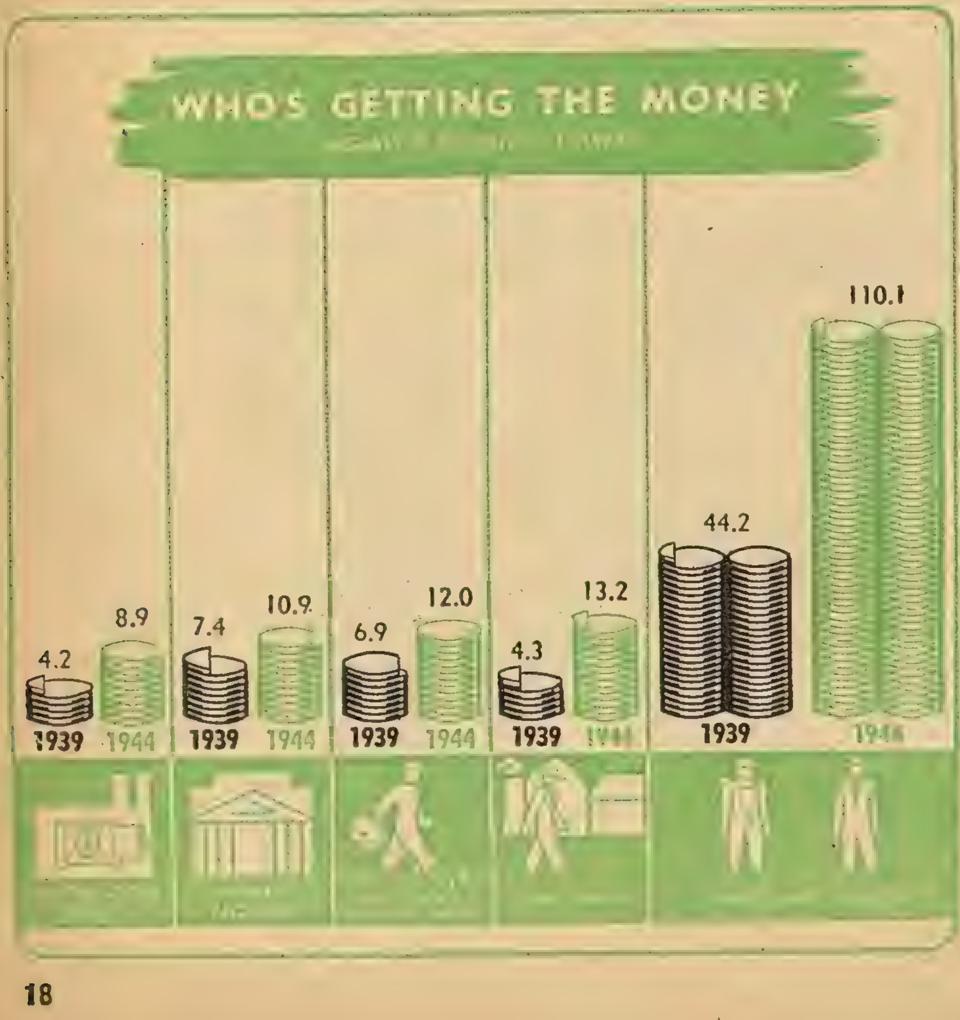
Corporation profits have a little more than doubled, rising from 1939's 4.2 billion dollars to 9 billions estimated for 1944. (But this increase, magnificent though it is, constitutes only 6 per cent of the gain in national income. Furthermore, most of the very large corporations have gained little or not at all.)

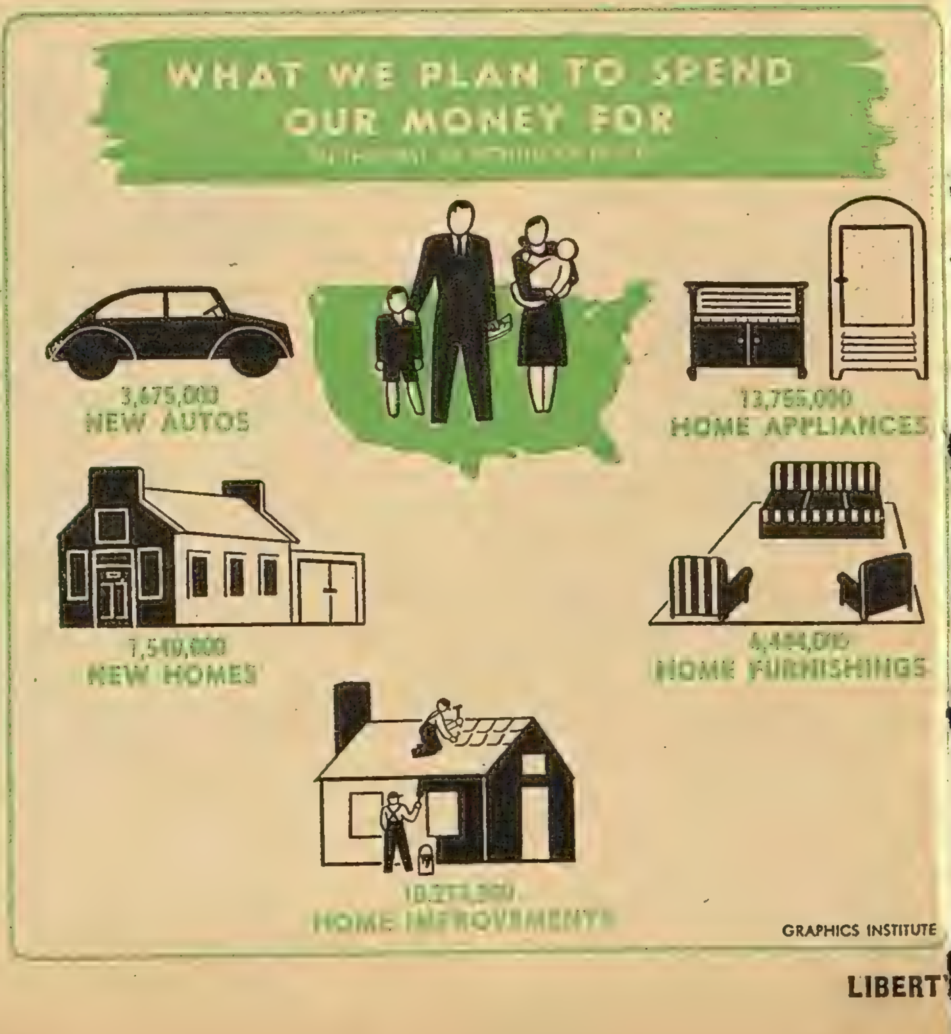
Professional and small business men—your dentist, lawyer, grocer—are taking in two thirds again as much as they were. (But war has put a good many out of business, and some of the others are hanging on by their teeth.)

Incomes from interest and rent are half again as much as they were five years ago. (But some statisticians estimate the cost of living has risen that much.)

Corporate dividends have increased comparatively little.

(Continued on page 62)





GRAPHICS INSTITUTE

FOREVER WINSOR

BY ART COHN

IT is rarely a pleasant task for an editor to cashier a reporter, and when the victim happens to be a fugitive from a Goldwyn chorus it is a devil's duty. But the annual spring economy wave had hit the Oakland Tribune. Someone had to be lopped off the overcrowded sports department, and Mrs. Bob Herwig, née Kathleen Winsor, its only woman, was marked.

She was receiving a paltry eighteen scooties a week; but if I kept her on the payroll and sacked anyone else, the scandal would have blown both of us out of California. As it was, half the town suspected I was ghosting her copy, and what the other half suspected is better eschewed. No one that beautiful can write too, they whispered.

So I fired her, little realizing in that moment I had reserved an imperishable niche alongside Fred "Windy" Winsor (no relation), who enjoys a form of immortality as the fight manager who once got rid of a young heavyweight named Jack Dempsey "because he had no future."

Now, six years later, Kay Winsor has set belles-lettres on its buttocks with Forever Amber, a novel set in Restoration England that is sweeping the country as no tale since Gone with the Wind. Its voluptuous heroine, Amber St. Clare, according to Time magazine, "makes Scarlett O'Hara look like a schoolmarm."

A candid portrait of the amazingly pretty and amazingly young woman who created bawdy, best-selling Forever Amber, as sketched by the boss who once fired her from an $18-a-week job

Macmillan's, a titan in publishing, was so confident of its discovery that it appropriated $20,000 to launch the initial promotional campaign, its most extravagant builderoo since G. W. T. W., and it borrowed every available ream of paper to produce a first printing of 100,000 copies (par for an unknown author's first novel is 10,000).

Within two weeks of publication Amber had been damned by most critics, banned in Boston, ensconced at the top of nearly every best-seller list, sold out at all bookstalls, and peddled to Twentieth-Century Fox for $200,000, pending the Hays' office benediction. And every alleged actress in Hollywood capable of distinguishing her right foot from the left had entered the sweepstakes for the role of Amber St. Clare, who rose from anonymous harlot to favorite mistress of Charles II—a sort of progressive courtesan.

Kathleen Winsor: she knew what she wanted and she knew how to get it.

Kathleen Winsor has come quite a way since the Saturdays of yesterday when she sat in the press boxes of stadia up and down the California coast. There, while tens of thousands hysterically cheered and sobbed over dramatic goal-line stands, she calmly wrote paragraphs like, "Football has taken the place of the ancient Roman amphitheater now there are no more Christians to persecute."

Below, on the lime-ribboned field, head and shoulders above all others, was a sweating giant, six feet four inches and 220 pounds of man, heart and soul of the 1937 University of California team, never defeated, winner of the Rose Bowl game and the national championship. The blond Goliath was Cal's All-America center, Bob Herwig, Kay's husband.

She was worried about him then, even as she worries about him now as he plays for keeps as a lieutenant in the Fourth Marines in the Pacific. But she has never lost her poise, let alone control of her emotions, even when word came last summer that Bob had been wounded in the landing on Guam. It is not that she lacks emotions; it's only that she masks them.

Now, in the first flush of celebrity, a character presumed to be Kathleen Winsor is being invented. The bawdy, lusty adventures of Amber already are inspiring as much comment as the author's own ravishing beauty. Winsor will be portrayed as a modern Cinderella, and her book a miracle, and nothing could be more alien to the truth.

It is not luck that Kay hit the jack pot with her first novel. A risk—yes, and she alone took it when she gambled five years of her life against Success. Just turned twenty; she withdrew into seclusion and sacrificed most normal pleasures to chase a will-o'-the-wisp that did not even exist in her imagination. But it was deliberate.

All success stories are supposed to have a beginning, and I suppose Kay's started the afternoon Bob, her classmate-husband, brought home an armful of books and an assignment for a term paper—the death of Charles II. Her interest was aroused by Charles and his lusty court. . . .

But when she began Amber, she had no semblance of a plot idea and, save for those football pieces in the Tribune, no professional experience in writing. She took no literary courses in college and never even thought of contributing to any of its publications. She thought she wanted to be a newspaper reporter, so when the sports department job folded and the editorial department receptionist quit her job and eloped, I secured it for Kay with a vague promise that a reporter's job might follow.

She languished as a receptionist for six months outside the door that separated her from the newsroom. And she never did get in. For that matter, neither did countless others who had appointments. They would get as far as her desk, take one look, and become so enchanted by her beauty that they would suddenly forget where they were supposed to go. The congestion of traffic around her desk became critical.

(Continued on page 55)

The Insignificant Wong Loh

In the mysterious East the ways of Fate seem stranger than elsewhere. For example, this tale of a murderer whose single bullet cut down his victim and proved his own undoing

BY WALTER C. BROWN

ILLUSTRATED BY LAWRENCE BUTCHER

Liberty's SHORT SHORT STORY

LYING flat against the sloping roof of faded blue tiles that overlooked the Hutung Hung Teng—Red Lamp Lane—Captain Tenjo Shuraki of the Japanese *Kempei* gripped his black-barreled automatic as he watched the crooked *hutung*, closed now to all traffic by a cordon of Chinese military police.

He knew that presently, along this protective lane of well-armed watchers, would come the man whom it was his eagerly-accepted mission to kill. Shuraki had chosen his ambush post well, for it was directly opposite the wide-open gates of the Happy Dragon Teahouse, where his unwarned victim was scheduled to hold rendezvous with the famous Chinese General Sheng.

From the ridged roof the whole courtyard of the Happy Dragon lay under his eyes—the courtyard where, at this very moment, gaunt old Wong Loh, the *mafoo*, was busy hanging up extra lanterns, as if to make Shuraki's deadly task all the easier.

But the Japanese killer paid scant attention to old Wong Loh, who was merely a gateman, a person of no significance whatever to the carefully-laid plans of Captain Shuraki—plans worked out to the last, most minute detail.

Disguised as a Chinese beggar, Shuraki had been patiently haunting Red Lamp Lane for days, rattling a few copper *cash* in his wooden begging bowl and whining his beggar's chant to every passer-by. He had done this boldly, knowing there was nothing in his appearance or accent to betray his origin to any Chinese eye or ear.

Shuraki's fingers tightened tensely on the automatic as a black limousine came rolling swiftly along Red Lamp Lane. Without slackening speed, it whirled through the gates of the Happy Dragon, stopping with an abruptness that made the chassis rise on its springs.

Wong Loh the *mafoo* rushed forward to open the car door, bowing deeply in a three-time kowtow as a gray-haired officer in immaculate uniform stepped out, his tall lean figure plainly revealed under the courtyard lanterns.

Sucking in his breath with a deep-drawn hiss, the Japanese forced his hand to steadiness as he raised the automatic. This was the man he had sworn to destroy—this thrice-accursed American, sky master of the great Superfortresses whose coming had struck stark terror into the very heart of Japan.

Pitiless hatred surged in Shuraki's soul as he leveled the gun at the cursed foreign devil who was unleashing the terrifying power of those great new American sky dragons against the sacred soil of Nippon. The names of stricken cities raced through Shuraki's brain—Yawata—Sasebo—Nagasaki. And more to come, many more, in a litany of gathering doom.

Steadily, carefully, Shuraki took aim. He must not fail this priceless opportunity, gained only after weeks of fruitless prowling around the edges of the carefully guarded airfield built outside this ancient walled town of Fo-Shao.

Now the gray-haired American sky master was directly within the sights of the black-barreled automatic. The muzzle moved down—down—bearing exactly on the double row of service ribbons under the gleaming wing insigne.

Shuraki's finger pressed deliberately on the trigger—

And it was at that precise moment that the insignificant Wong Loh, happening to glance upward, caught a glimpse of Shuraki's dark figure rising menacingly above the roof line.

"Hai!" the *mafoo* gasped, and with reckless disregard of his own safety he lunged forward, thrusting against the American sky master just as Shuraki's bullet plowed through the windshield of the limousine with a jangling crash.

Standing upright now, Shuraki fired twice more in quick succession as the American commander, roused by Wong Loh's frantic gestures, made a headlong jump to cover behind the metal bulk of the automobile.

BY that time the startled Chinese guards along the *hutung* had swung into action, firing hastily at the shadowy figure on the roof. But defiantly Captain Shuraki held his upright position, snarling bitter Nipponese curses at the worthless *mafoo* who had foiled his dream of *bushido* vengeance.

"Die, slant-eyed dog—die!" he screamed, and, frenzied with rage, turned his gun upon Wong Loh, drilling bullet after bullet into the *mafoo's* jerking, swaying body until the clip was exhausted and old Wong Loh lay in a crumpled heap.

A sudden searing pain, as if a white-hot wire were boring through his leg, brought Shuraki sprawling on the roof. With probing fingers he felt where the bullet had passed through the fleshy part of his calf, and swiftly tearing a strip from his beggar's *shaam*, tied it hastily to stop the spurting blood.

Then, as the Han guards raced forward to climb the *hutung* walls, the Japanese crawled to the rear edge of the tiled roof, hung by his fingertips, and dropped to the ground.

Gritting his teeth against the pain of movement, he crept through a weed-grown garden, clambered over a wall of rough stones, and groped his way through a dark and deserted courtyard into the next *hutung*. Following a series of black and snakelike alleys, he was for the moment safe from immediate pursuit.

But Shuraki knew his situation was desperate. The bloodstains on the roof would show his enemies he was wounded. Fo-Shao was a walled town—orders would go out at once to the four gates to seize any wounded man, and when daylight came he would have no chance at all to escape detection.

He breathed a curse as his fingers touched the makeshift bandage, already soaked with blood.

"It is useless to rush about like a rat in a bamboo trap," he told himself. "I must think—I must plan—"

And very soon he had a plan shaping up in his mind, for Captain Tenjo Shuraki of the Imperial Secret Police was well-trained in quick thinking and the use of ruthless guile. He must find a doctor, and then escape from this walled town before daylight.

He prodded his memory. Just the day previous he had passed a *pailou* which bore a physician's scroll. But where? Where? . . . Yes, now he had it—in the Hutung Lung-chen, not so far distant.

Limping painfully, he made his way to Lung-chen Lane. Memory had served him well, for there were a doctor's insignia at North-Four. An elderly Chinese opened to his knocking and Shuraki limped inside.

"I have a flesh wound in the leg, *kuan*," Shuraki explained. "Hasten, for I grow weak from loss of blood."

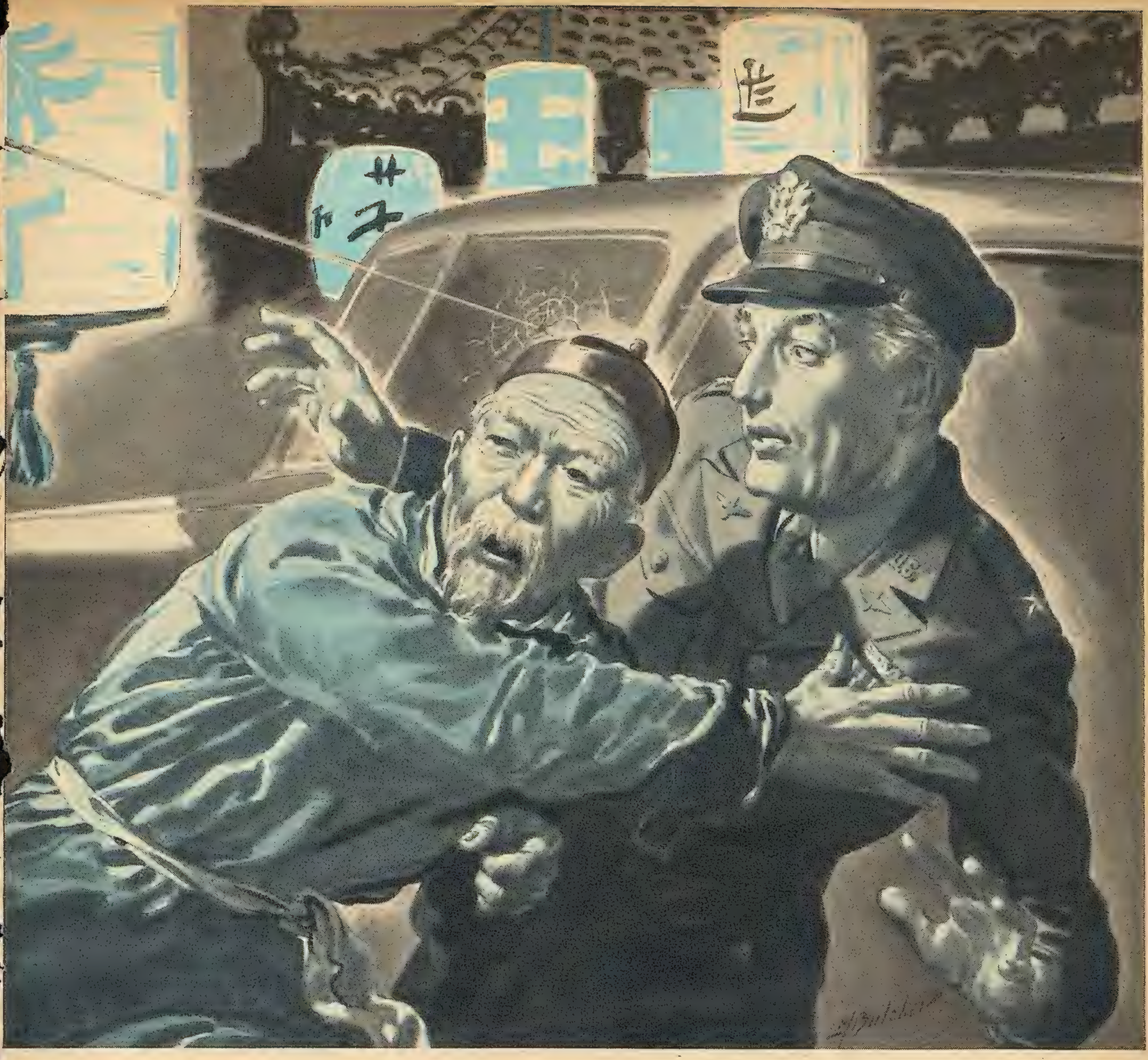
The slant-eyed doctor removed the blood-soaked rag, and his eyes grew round. *"Hola!* This is a wound made by a bullet! It is required by law that I make report to the police *yamen*."

"Wah!" Shuraki agreed, smiling. "I do not fear to tell my story to the police. But first, *kuan*, attend to my wound."

Reassured by his patient's calm and polite manner, the Chinese doctor proceeded to cleanse and bind up the bullet wound. And then, as he was washing the bloody stains from Shuraki's leg, the Japanese, leaning forward, brought the heavy butt end of the automatic down on the *kuan's* head. Twice more he struck.

Moving with speed and precision, he stripped the slant-eyed doctor of silk robe and brocaded slippers, donning them in place of his soiled beggar's *shaam* and broken coolie sandals. Then he hunted through the doctor's belongings until he found his *hu-chao*—the official passport to the city gates.

"Banzai!" Shuraki grinned as he let himself out of the dead *kuan's* house and crept from Lung-chen Lane to a wide



He lunged forward, thrusting against the American sky-master just as Shuraki's bullet plowed through the windshield of the limousine.

cross street, where he boldly hailed a passing cart driver.

"Fifty *yuan,* if you will carry me to the village of Ho-Kai!"

"The city gates are closed at this hour, master," the driver replied.

"I am a *kuan,*" Shuraki declared. "I have a *hu-chao.*"

"Can do!" the driver agreed then and reached down to help his passenger into the cart.

WHEN they came to the barricaded North Gate the cart driver pulled up before the heavy medieval arch and a captain of the guard came forward to examine their papers.

The officer glanced only briefly at the driver's credentials, but he scanned Shuraki's stolen *hu-chao* so very intently that the Japanese grew taut with apprehension.

"You are the physician Wing Hoy?" the captain asked.

"Aye—aye!" Shuraki replied nervously.

"I cannot allow you to leave the city," the captain announced.

"*Hoya!* What means this?" Shuraki demanded, striving to keep the rising panic out of his voice. "Is not my *hu-chao* in perfect order? Does it not bear the signature of the *toa-tai* himself?"

"I do not question your papers, *kuan,*" the captain replied briskly. "Nevertheless you cannot leave Fo-Shao tonight."

"But—but I have urgent business awaiting me in Ho-Kai," Shuraki insisted. "I am summoned by a patient who hovers between life and death—"

"There is a patient nearer at hand, *kuan,* in greater need of your services," the captain snapped. "We have just received word of an attempt upon the life of the American *ta-jen* who commands the great sky dragons. Luckily the American's life was saved by a brave *mafoo,* who now lies dangerously wounded. You must report at once, *kuan,* to the Happy Dragon Teahouse in Red Lamp Lane. It is an order—a military order! Two of my men will ride with you, so that you may arrive with all speed."

SHURAKI'S face turned a grayish yellow as the slant-eyed soldiers climbed into the cart beside him.

He glanced around wildly, seeking in vain some way of escape from the web of his own weaving, tightening like a noose around his neck.

"Have no fear, *kuan,*" the captain of the guard assured him. "Your services will be well rewarded. The American sky chief has given personal order that no expense be spared. *Hola!* A mere teahouse *mafoo*—a person of no importance—is suddenly a Number One hero, with every doctor in Fo-Shao summoned instantly in an effort to save his life. The wheel of fortune makes many a strange turning—does it not, *kuan?*"

THE END

Trailing an arc of smoke and flame, a Jap bomber makes a futile attempt to crash-dive one of our escort carriers at Saipan.

The “Unbelievable”

Meet our escort carriers, the little CVEs which, in the grateful words of victorious Vice-Admiral Thomas C. Kinkaid, played such an “unbelievable” part in our rout of the Jap fleet in the Philippines. For five hell-filled hours a handful of unarmored baby flat-tops slugged it out toe to toe with major units of the Jap battle fleet. Two of them were sunk, others were damaged, but they fought the Japs groggy till our surface and air heavyweights could move in for the kill. Here, for the first time, is the full story of our CVEs, the Navy's amazing little “cardboard giant-killers.”

IF, before our invasion of the Philippines, you had grabbed the nearest citizen and asked him if the CVEs, our little escort carriers, had been of any help in the war effort, he would no doubt have replied that they had indeed—they'd helped us lick the German subs in the Atlantic. This is like knowing that the five-and-dime stores handle shoe polish.

Under the pressure of the dog-eat-dog war we're fighting out in the Western Pacific, our baby flat-tops have been going in to slug it out against the Jap on missions that no one, not even their builders, ever dreamed they could handle. Beginning at fog-shrouded Attu and continuing through the invasions of the Gilberts, the Marshalls, Hollandia, the Marianas, the Palau Islands, and now the Philippines, our baby flat-tops have grown up. They've taken on additional combat duties at such a rate that if you call one a baby carrier to its face now, you're apt to get a sock in the teeth.

And deservedly. During the hard days of Saipan, for instance, our CVEs were busier than a three-legged dog with four fleas. Steaming back and forth day after day within actual sight of that hard little Jap nut our marines were cracking, a tenacious band of CVEs broke the world's record for continuous operation by a naval task force inside an enemy area. Under the personal command of one of our most rugged rear admirals, a gentleman fully capable of taking care of self and friends in rough going, the little CVEs sailed right into the back yard of the Jap war lords and pitched a tent. Despite enemy bombs and torpedoes and Tokyo Rose's nightly threats of complete annihilation, they stayed right there on the scene for twenty-three days, leaving only after word came from Marine headquarters ashore that “the Island of Saipan is secured!” If ever a world's record was set largely on nerve, this one was it.

Before you can start to appreciate the job our CVEs are doing in the Pacific, you must understand what a CVE is.

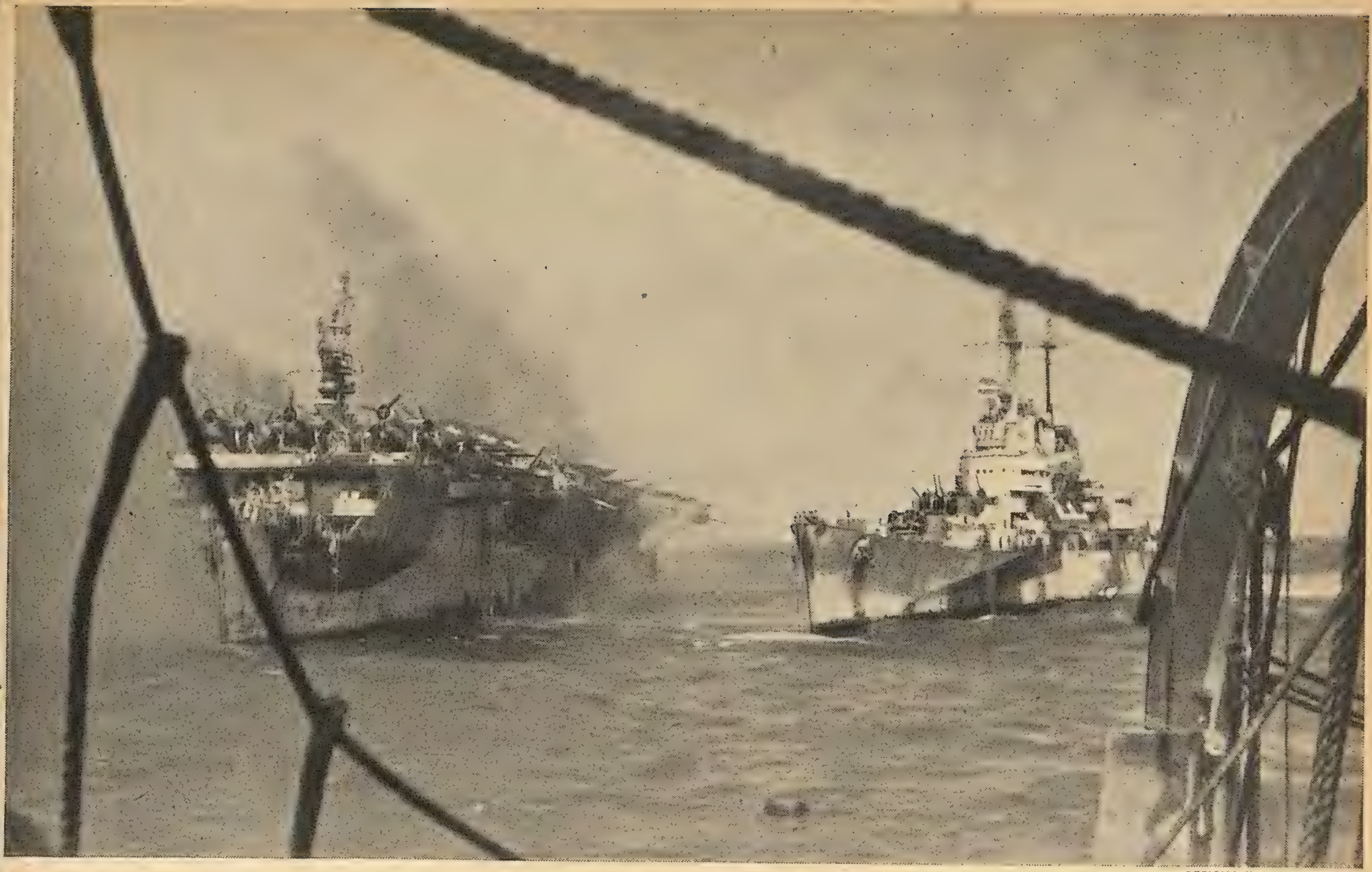
To be perfectly frank with you, it isn't much. Militarily speaking, a CVE isn't a military ship at all. It's a merchant ship, topped by a small flight deck and a few antiaircraft guns. From the waist down, a CVE is still a civilian, a fact of which those aboard are painfully aware.

Roughly, we have three types of carriers. The big carriers, the CVs, are designed and built from the keel up for the hurly-burly of combat. Their outer hide is tough, and under their great flight deck, well over 800 feet long, their interior is not only well protected but split up into countless strong and watertight individual compartments. Also, their stores of explosives are well insulated against the shock of enemy attack. A big CV can absorb several enemy torpedoes, salt them down with an assortment of enemy bombs, and still get home in time for dinner.

The medium carriers, the CVLs, were converted into carriers from good solid-design Navy cruisers, and thus also possess this cozy factor known as “watertight integrity.” The flight deck of the CVL is somewhat narrower than that of the CV, but it's more than 650 feet long, and the ship itself can take a sizable punch practically as well as a full-size CV. And if things get too warm, either a CV or a CVL can pour on the coal and head for home like a giant speedboat.

The little CVEs are a different matter altogether. Their slapped-on flight deck is less than 500 feet long, their speed is little better than that of a good cargo ship, and their protection against enemy attack consists largely of the officers and men aboard growing beards.

Allowing for only slight poetic license, a CVE can take a punch about as well as a good strong shopping bag. Its watertight



OFFICIAL U. S. NAVY PHOTOS

A cruiser pours water into the Princeton, one of two CVEs sunk in the Philippines. It took a whole Jap fleet to do it.

Baby Flat-Tops

BY HANNIBAL COONS

integrity consists in the main of making the outer hull of some simple, non-porous material, and then posting neat "Abandon ship" instructions here and there about the inner premises. The CVEs are sliced off from fore to aft into from six to eleven "watertight" compartments, and theoretically could take one torpedo hit fairly handily. The men aboard take this with a grain of salt, however, for many of the "watertight" doors appear to be kidding. They would no doubt withstand small quantities of water, such as might be present in fog or perspiration. Few people dispute the fact that *more* than one torpedo or adult-size bomb hit would give everyone aboard a bad case of immersion foot.

This is figured on the basis of "lucky" hits, where nothing goes off but the invading bomb or torpedo itself. Add to this the fact that the thin skin of the CVE is practically bulging with its own load of torpedoes, bombs, fuses, ammunition, and high-test gasoline, and you have a very comforting picture indeed. The men who sail the CVEs say that a CVE will take two torpedoes—one into it, and one over it. The junior officers sleep in a group of cabins just below the water level amidships, and with the stout humor of the young refer to their quarters as "Torpedo Junction."

Such are our CVEs. These are the ships which, believe it or not, have practically climbed up onto the beaches to drive the Japs absolutely nuts throughout seven major Pacific invasions. And up to the time of our head-on meeting with the main Jap battle fleet in the Philippines we had lost only one CVE in the entire Pacific war! Even in the history-making battle of the Philippines it took practically the whole Jap fleet to sink two more of the little fellows.

This is due to the interesting fact that our Navy isn't in the habit of sending even its seagoing Davids into combat without the benefit of a few well-oiled slingshots. The Navy has provided the CVEs with a few helpful items for their own team—the beautiful sleek destroyers that shepherd them about; their planes, which once in the air are just as powerful fighting machines as the same planes flown off the biggest CV or land base in the world; their guns, which can throw up a startling amount of "lead" at aerial attackers; and, last but by no means least, their short turning radius. A CVE, particularly a Kaiser CVE, can turn practically a square corner, and thus can "miss" a lot of torpedoes, bombs, and shells.

Most of the CVEs we now have were built by Mr. Henry J. "Buy 'Em by the Bag" Kaiser. This was not always the case. When we first decided that a flock of small-size carriers would be handy things to have around, Mr. Kaiser was, as we thought, fully occupied building merchant ships. For this and other reasons, our first fifty or so CVEs were built largely by the Seattle-Tacoma Shipbuilding Corporation (now the Todd Pacific Shipyards, Inc.) of Tacoma, Washington. Out of the first batch, Todd built thirty-five. The other fifteen or so were converted from merchant and oiler hulls acquired from the Maritime Commission, and the work was done at Newport News Shipbuilding Company, Bethlehem Steel Company (Staten Island), Western Pipe & Steel Company, Ingalls Shipbuilding Company, and the Norfolk and Pudget Sound Navy yards. As CVEs go, these early ones were pretty good ships. Incidentally, of this early group we lend-leased the British thirty-eight, which is why you now see the slightly later "Kaiser jobs" on all sides of you in any American CVE task force.

The first few CVEs had hardly hit the water when Mr. Kaiser came roaring into Washington, his slide rule quivering like an aspen. For heaven's sake, he cried, as he leaped off the train, if we needed a bunch of little carriers, why in the world hadn't someone let him know? How many of the little things did we need, and what day next week did we need 'em?

Mr. Kaiser is a man of disarming gentleness but, weight for age, he is undoubtedly the obstacle-race champion of this era. A few days later, after a little nimble footwork through the caverns of Washington, he had a contract for fifty CVEs in his pocket and was headed back out West to his doughnut-machine shipyards. Mr. Kaiser had a type of ship to build that he had never built before, and he was a happy man.

In no time at all it got pretty dangerous

(*Continued on page 58*)

ALL SOLDIERS ARE *Handsome*

Nina was the only one in the family not as nutty as a fruitcake, thought rich Uncle Ben. But then things happened which made him change his mind again and again and again

BY DARBY ST. JOHN

Illustrated by Rio Junco

MRS. FRINK said, "Has Mr. Abbott rung for breakfast yet, Etta?"

"No, ma'am." The maid paused at the turn of the big house's drafty stairs. Etta was thin and was all bones. Looking down, Etta observed that her employer, a small, placid woman, was as near frustration as she ever came. Mrs. Frink had the enormous gift of accepting cataclysms as ordinary events, and the arrival of Uncle Benjamin Abbott, Etta was aware, was a cataclysm.

Mrs. Frink said, "Be sure not to keep him waiting, Etta."

"Yes ma'am."

"And, Etta, he doesn't like his chocolate too hot. Be sure it isn't too hot. When Mr. Abbott gets up with a bad temper he keeps it all day."

Etta nodded. Etta understood. She had a stake in Benjamin Abbott's good humor. Men in bad temper did not make out checks, and Etta's back wages were in that check.

Mrs. Frink broke off a rosebud from the bouquet on the piano.

"You might put this on his tray. Mr. Abbott loves flowers."

Nina came down the drafty stairs as Etta went up, and at the same moment Frisby showed up from the vestibule with the morning mail. The butler looked like an ex-pugilist; the morning mail looked, as always, ominous; and Nina was a long lean girl with smooth brown hair held out of her eyes with a bit of ribbon. Her eyes were cool, gray, and very wide. Nina said, "Uncle Ben down yet?"

Mrs. Frink reached for the mail. "No, dear. And your father is in the cellar with his invention again."

Nina peered at the mail. She said, "Do you think Uncle Ben's going to give papa the ten thousand he needs?"

"Up to last night he wasn't."

Frisby paused. "By the way, ma'am," he said, "yesterday was payday. Again."

"Later, Frisby. Oh, dear!" Mrs. Frink fluttered vaguely. "Nothing but bills, bills, bills." Frisby went out. "They are threatening to shut off the lights," Mrs. Frink said placidly.

Nina reached. "That's a bill for me—that dress I got at Dun's."

"If they do," Mrs. Frink said, "there's a box of candles in the attic."

Nina opened her bill. "When we pay them," Nina said, "they'll probably leave."

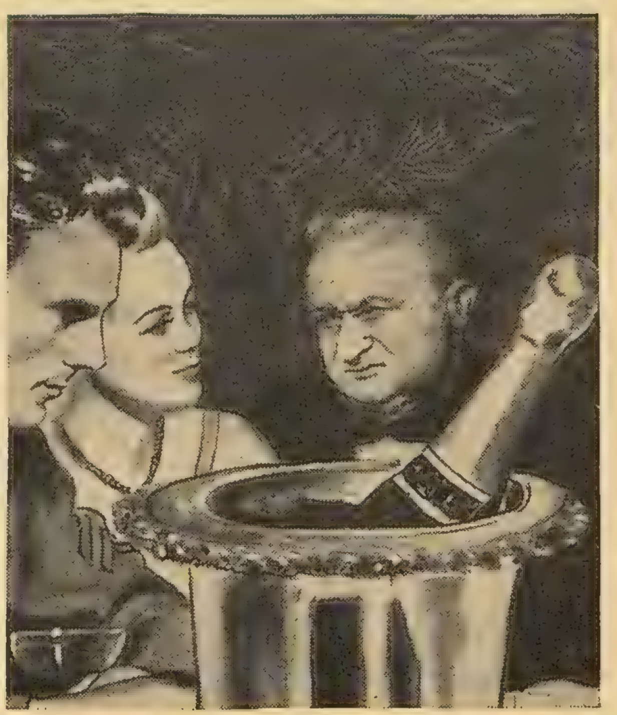
"Who, dear?"

"Etta and Frisby. They'd have gone to work in a war plant long ago." Nina thumbed over the envelopes. "We are really impeding the war effort by not paying them," Nina said.

"That's so, dear." Mrs. Frink frowned. "We must certainly pay them as soon as we can, if it's the patriotic thing to do. I'll speak to Uncle Ben about it."

"Here's Uncle Ben's mail. And—"

"What's the matter, dear?"



Uncle Ben swung his irate glance on Jeff—"What is your work, sir?"

Nina was looking at a yellow envelope in her hand. "Frisby might have mentioned he had a telegram for me!"

Nina tore open the envelope and stared down at the telegram. Her fingers dropped Uncle Ben's mail, unheeded, on the table.

Her mother lifted a placid face. "What is it, dear?"

Nina said, "It's from Jeff. He's arriving this afternoon."

"What are you going to do about it?"

Panic showed in the girl's face. "What *will* I do?" Nina said. "I—I hardly even remember what he looks like!"

MRS. FRINK met this emergency, as all, with unruffled calm. "Wire him to wear a daffodil behind his ear," she said.

"I might—yes," Nina said. "I'll have him wear a carnation."

"Everybody wears carnations."

"Only if they have a mother," Nina said. "Well, I'll wire him to wear a rosebud. But what am I going to do with him? I can't bring him here!"

"Why not? He's your husband."

"But— I hardly know him."

Mrs. Frink shrugged calmly. "You really should have thought of that before you married him, dear. You are just like your father," Mrs. Frink said. "No Abbott ever went around marrying strange men. I knew your father a whole week before I married him. Why did you do it?"

Nina gulped. "I was being p-patriotic."

"Really, dear?"

Nina wondered if her mother did not remember things or was merely preoccupied. "I told you, mama," Nina said. "That was why I made that blind date with him the night Harry's company was shipped overseas. There was Velma deciding to marry Harry to comfort him while he was away. And there was Jeff," Nina said, "leaving too. And the bands were playing, and we went with Harry and Velma while they got married. And Velma said why didn't I do the patriotic thing? So I—I did."

Her mother sighed. "I wish I had met him, dear. You say he was good-looking?"

"Of course," Nina said. "All soldiers are handsome."

Her parent received this statement philosophically. Nina said, "Even so, we don't want him here. I'll drop him off at some nice hotel."

"The Wedgewood, perhaps."

"Or the Gloucester—that's farther away." She said defensively, "At least he hasn't been missing me! He didn't write a letter all the ten months he was gone."

Mrs. Frink said in vague alarm, "But he can't stay at a hotel."

"Why not?"

"What would Uncle Ben think?"

THE cellar door flew open; Mr. Frink emerged, blinking into the light. Mr. Frink was an inventor suffering from a lifelong case of optimism.

"I've nearly got it! I tell you, Maude, if Uncle Ben lets me have that ten thousand, we're a cinch to make a fortune," Mr. Frink cried. *"Millions!"* And Frisby came in from the hall.

"Do you want to talk to the collection agency, ma'am?" Frisby inquired. "They are on the phone again."

"No, thank you, Frisby." Mrs. Frink motioned vaguely with her hand. "Ask them to call again tomorrow. And say I do appreciate their calling."

Frisby went out, and Mr. Frink crie pettishly, "How can I work if I'm annoyed all day long by these absurd bill collectors?"

"You haven't been, dear," his wife said soothingly. "You have been in the cellar. But they've been ever so nice."

"Posh," Mr. Frink said loftily. "Uncle Ben has got to see the point. Six thousand to put over the invention and fou thousand to clear up debts so I can hav peace of mind from these annoyances. That's all I ask," Mr. Frink said. "That's all." Mr. Frink disappeared again through his cellar door.

And just in time. There came a snortin and a stomping from the hall above and Uncle Ben started a laborious descent of the stairs. Uncle Ben was a tough ol gentleman with fierce brows, an unlighte cigar, and a great quantity of silk dressing gown covering a mountain of flesh. Uncle Ben was that relic of a bygone era,

(*Continued on page 48*)

"You know why I married you," Nina said. "We were intoxicated with the war. I—I married you for morale."

Ox

The Camera Eye

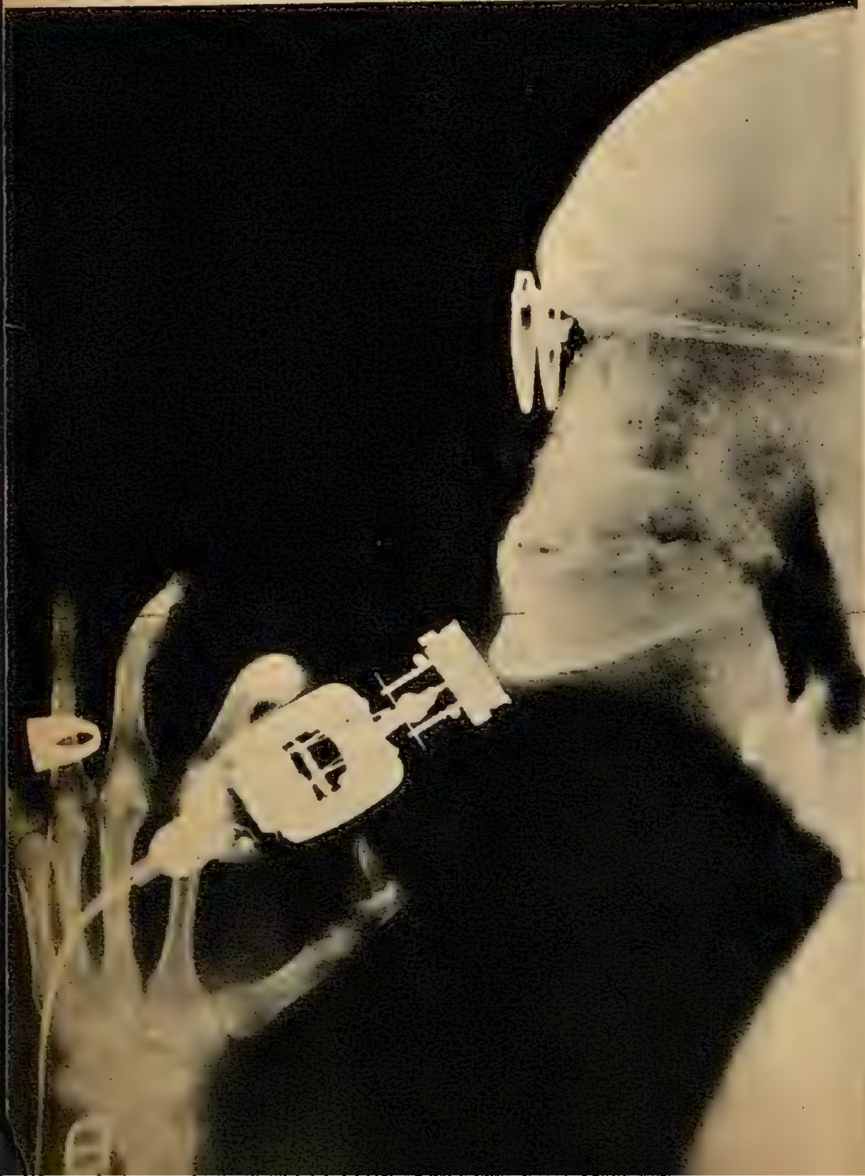
Few events on Earth and few people, great or merely odd, escape the camera's nimble probing

TWO JOES—Balancing a camera, little Joe DiMaggio poses for a gag picture with his father. Big Joe was on leave in New York from Seventh Air Force, Hawaii, when they got together.

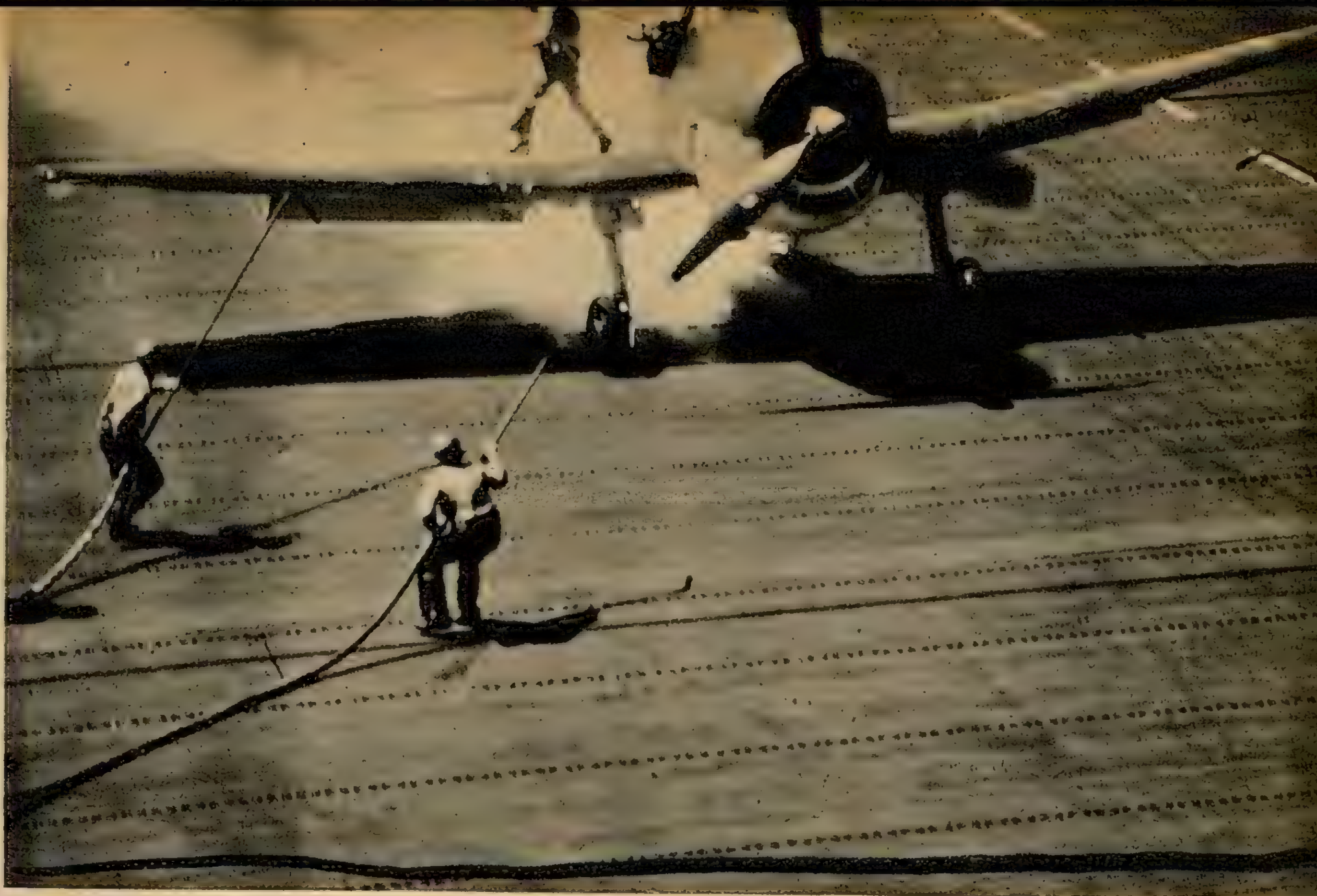
PRESIDENT'S PICK—President Roosevelt selected this picture of glider troops during maneuvers at Camp Mackall, N. C., as grand prize winner in the annual exhibition of the White House News Photographers Association. Photographer was Robert Woodsum of Acme. ▲

HEY, WHAT'S THIS STUFF?—Four English youngsters got their first taste of ice cream recently when the British government lifted ban on its manufacture. It was the first time in these kids' memories ice cream was legal. ▶

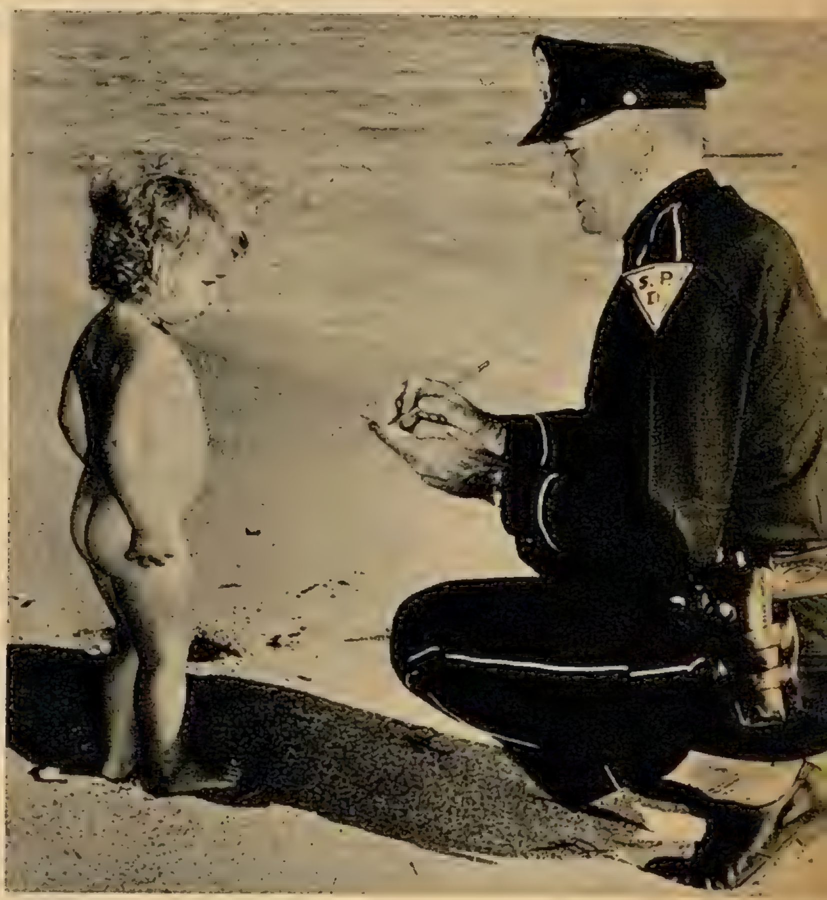
SKELETON IN THE BATHROOM—Don't be alarmed. This is an ultra-high-speed X-ray of a man shaving, made at Westinghouse laboratories in one millionth of a second. Isn't it nice to know how you look in the morning? ▼



JUNGLE PIPE LINE—Two oil engineers, Corporals Richard N. Bosted of Berkeley, Calif., and Bert Stapleton of Janesville, Wis., lug a section of pipe through the Burma jungle at Warazup, where it will hook up with the China-Burma-India line.



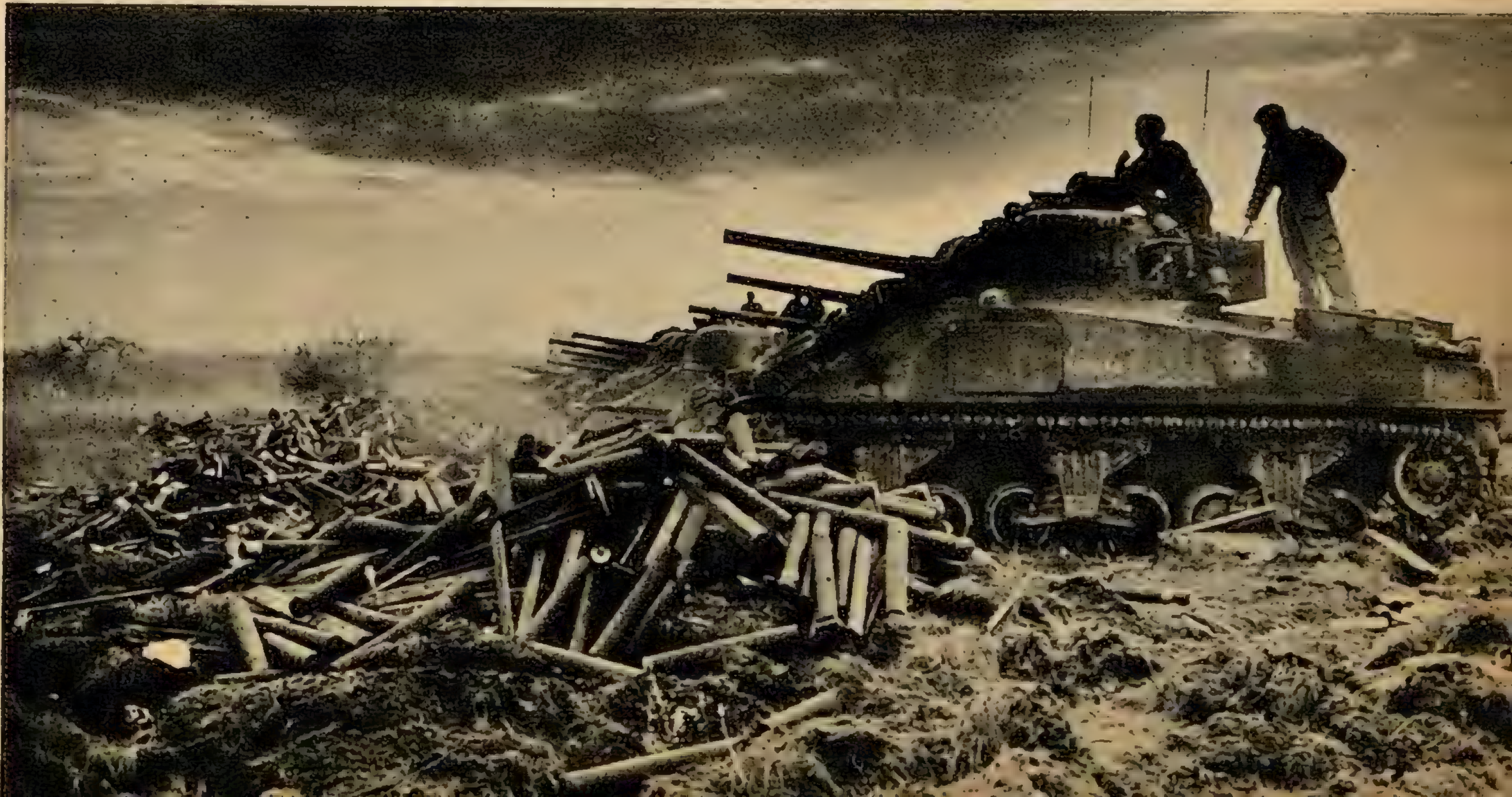
BALL OF FIRE—Lieut. Alfred W. Magee didn't know his plane was on fire until he landed on the carrier Cowpens. Then he got out in a hurry and left the rest to the deck crew.

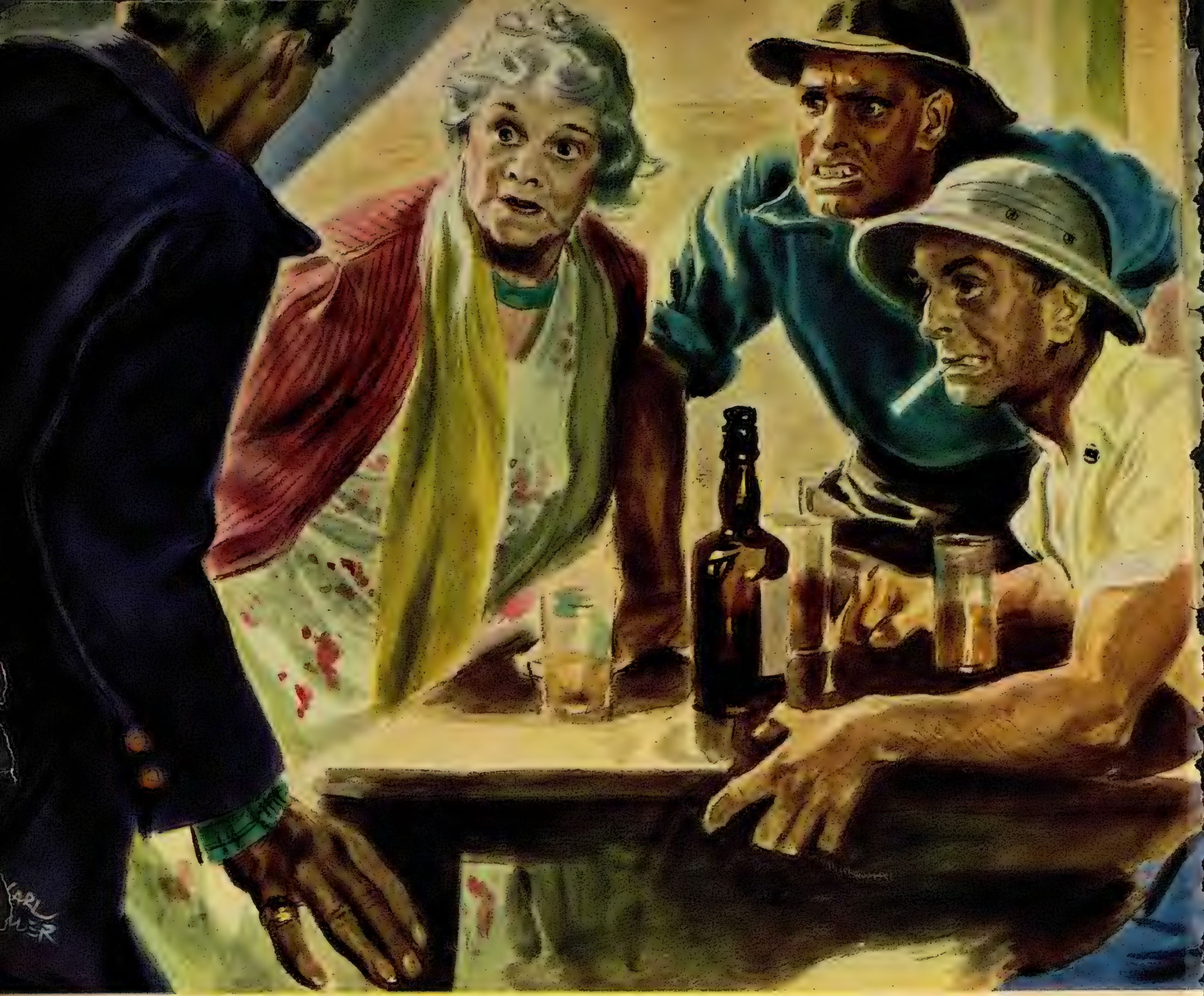


LITTLE LAWBREAKER—At Miami Beach (famous for swimming and smart publicity pictures) two-year-old Pamela Gray is supposed to be telling Officer Ewing a naughty wave has just stolen her suit.

FARMER'S DAUGHTER—The Traveling Salesmen's League of America, who ought to know, have chosen Noreen Roth as the "typical farmer's daughter." This is possibly connected with Miss Roth's role as the daughter of a farmer in a new movie, Hold Autumn in Your Hand.

TANK ARTILLERY—Under a lowering winter sky twelve British tanks line up to pour it on Geilenkirchen. Mounds of shell cases heaped around testify to fury of the barrage.





Doc yanked back the curtain. Six startled eyes met his—those of Bessie and of two unkempt, unsteady, hard-bitten hombres.

Bessie Arbruster Plugs a Chain-Gunger

By Ronald G. Sercombe

ILLUSTRATED BY CARL MUELLER

BESSIE ARBRUSTER grimly gripped the ice-sheathed helm of the Lark as the little cruiser sloshed through the frost-bitten waters of Barkentine Channel and churned into the frothy rip of Arbruster Bay.

She was cold clean through, from the tips of her worn gum boots to the salt-stained peak of her sou'wester.

As she neared the Arbruster docks she swung the throbbing Lark sharply to port and hiccoughed.

"Oops!" said Bessie. "Par'n me."

Arbruster docks looked lonely and forbidding. But as Bessie cut the motor and dropped anchors fore and aft, a silvery-mustached lean and lanky figure in leather jacket and peaked yachting cap ambled bayward over the pier.

"'Hoy," said the figure. "What cooks?"

"'Hoy, Doc," Bessie replied. Her voice was weary, colorless. She climbed ungracefully over the rail and was assisted to the pier by Doc Harrison, her warmest friend and fishing partner.

"Where the hell you been?" Doc demanded gruffly.

Bessie's chin jutted.

"Been vittlin' up the Coast Guard boys," she snapped. "They gotta have chow—same's you and me. Any customers up't Inn?"

Doc's blue eyes twinkled.

"Don't be silly," he said. "What's anybody going to catch this time of year? Frozen fillets? I don't know why— Hey!"

Bessie had slumped to her knees on the dock and was gripping her chest. In a flash Doc was on his knees beside her and his wiry arms were around her ample waist. Bessie struggled to her feet.

"Cripes!" she breathed. "'S'all right, Doc. Too much onions and mackerel, mebbe."

Beneath the single ten-watt bulb on the pier Doc studied her face anxiously and took her pulse.

"Bessie," Doc said, and his tone was serious, "I'm taking you right over to Doc Duval's office. For a check-up."

Bessie's protests were futile.

The old fishergal puts into a Florida port and casts her tarpon line. The fish she gets is an ugly one and armed with a shotgun to boot. Who but our Bessie could solve a kidnaping that way?

It was a cold ride to the other end of Barkentine Island where Dr. Ralph Duval maintained somewhat luxurious offices. But the fat jovial physician welcomed them warmly.

"Doc Harrison," he shouted, "and—and Bessie. By Gad, I'm honored. Come in. I'll mix a drink. Mrs. Duval has retired—Here, you know my boy, Albert, don't you?"

Albert, who appeared to be about twelve years old, scrambled up from the living-room floor where he was reading a book on deep-sea fishing. He shook hands politely, timidly, and disappeared.

"That boy is just crazy about fishing and boats," Dr. Duval explained. "He's more at home in a boat than a house. Mrs. Duval and I no longer worry about him when he's on water. He's a better sailor than I."

AS Dr. Duval began to mix drinks for them, Doc told him about Bessie. Dr. Duval frowned, vanished for a moment, and returned clad in white smock. He held a small light in Bessie's mouth and inspected her throat.

"H'mmm," he said.

"Ye-up," Bessie commented, "thass what I allus say when the Lark's motor conks."

"Stow the gaff," Doc ordered, but Dr. Duval just grinned.

"Remove that blouse, Bess," he said.

Bessie's gale-flushed cheeks turned a brilliant red.

"Now you lissen here—" she began.

"Oh for heaven's sake, Bessie," said Doc impatiently, but she was adamant until he left the room. The examination took about an hour, and later, in front of a glowing hearth and over cups of coffee, Dr. Duval lectured Bessie briefly.

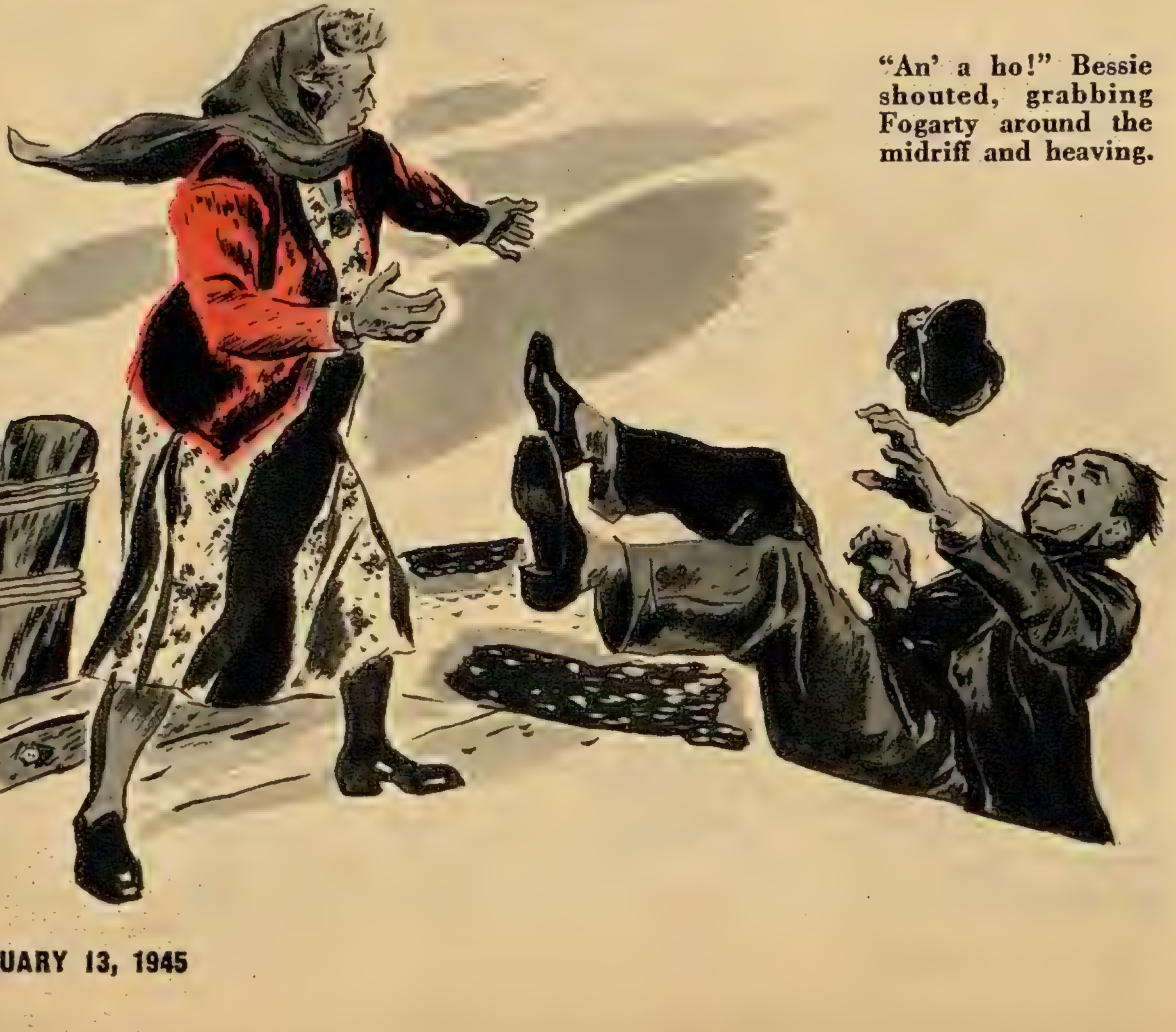
"You're run down," he said shortly. "Too much work. Too much worry. Your cardiac muscles have been strained and there are indications of hypertension. I know you have been suffering from migraine."

Bessie's jaw dropped a full two inches.

"Sufferin' catfish," she muttered. "Wha-what?"

Dr. Duval grinned a little.

"You've got barnacles, Bess," he said. "A month in dry dock with a little caulking and a few adjustments to the main bearing and you'll be as good as new. You're going to take a vacation."



"An' a ho!" Bessie shouted, grabbing Fogarty around the midriff and heaving.

"Wid whose pension?" chortled Bessie. Dr. Duval was insistent.

"Day after tomorrow," he said, "Mrs. Duval and Albert and I leave for Miami. Mrs. Duval hasn't been well. It so happened that I made train reservations and then at the last minute got seats on a plane. Doc, there's a surgeons' convention at Miami next week. You'd bump into a lot of your old cronies. And I'll see that hotel reservations are made for you and Bessie. Now come on."

Doc scratched his head thoughtfully.

"Why not?" he said.

"But—" Bessie's round honest face was wreathed in worry.

"Charlie will look after the Inn," said Doc. "So stop fretting."

Bessie frowned and stared at the fire.

"Good fishing around Miami," smiled Dr. Duval.

A gleam shone in Bessie's blue eyes.

"Fishin'?" she asked.

"Ah," said Dr. Duval, "what fishin'."

THE hotel, a few blocks from Dr. Duval's Miami home, was luxurious. The weather was superb. Sparkling blue Biscayne Bay warmed Bessie's heart.

But after four days of rest and relaxation, discontent began gnawing relentlessly into her active mind.

"Good Guppie," she said to Doc at the breakfast table, "all a body does here is eat and drink and sit in rockin' chairs. Now me propeller's gittin' barnacles on't."

Doc, hidden behind a newspaper, didn't speak for several minutes. Then he said, "Well, if you're waiting for something to happen, you don't need to wait any longer. It has." His tone was grim.

It was on page one in heavy black type, almost topping the war news: "MEDICO'S SON EITHER KIDNAPED OR DROWNED."

Bessie read it. Her face paled.

"Don't say definite he was kidnaped," she muttered.

Doc's brow was knitted. "The boy was out fishing," he muttered, "and toward evening they found his little sports cruiser overturned in the intercoastal waterway. First reports were that he had drowned, but now the morning paper insists Dr. Duval received a kidnap note."

Bessie arose suddenly.

"Where you going?" Doc inquired.

"Gonna see Albert's daddy. Mebbe I kin do something."

"You're not on Barkentine Island now," Doc warned, "so don't get into any trouble."

She found Dr. Duval shaken and nervous.

"Thanks, Bessie, thanks a million," he said as he chain smoked, "but there is nothing you can do for us. Nothing."

Bessie was persistent.

"Warn't there somebody who seen young Al fishin'?" she demanded to know.

Dr. Duval shook his head impatiently.

"There's an old man—name of Jake Massey. Has a bait shack down near the drawbridge. He saw Albert heading for the Inlet. Said he stopped and bought some bait from a shrimp trawler. And now—Bessie . . ."

Bessie's steely-blue eyes bored into those of the agitated physician.

"Was he kidnaped?"

Dr. Duval looked at her pleadingly.

"Bessie," he said huskily, "believe me, will you, if I tell you that the less we say and do about this business, the better Albert's chances are?"

Bessie arose and her jaw was thrust out.

"Cripes, Doc," she said, and her tone was sharp, "I was allus told 'at ifn ye didn't hep yerself, nobody else was gonna hep ye. Whin there's a squall, ye gotta keep a stiff grip on t' helm."

Having delivered this bit of philosophy Bessie flounced out.

TEN minutes later pedestrians and motorists were somewhat amused to see a large woman on a small bicycle peddling furiously down Bay Shore Drive, perspiration pouring from her forehead.

At one intersection Bessie rode through a red light, was nearly struck by a truck, and succeeded in snarling traffic.

"Scram, Yankee," the truck driver yelled.

Bessie grinned widely. "We Yankees is doin' a swell job in Europe, hey?" she replied, and pedaled on.

Jake Massey, an old cracker, was inclined to be wary and recalcitrant. So Bessie hired a rod, bought some bait, and fished off his docks for about two hours. She succeeded in landing a four-pound drum, invaded Jake's shack where she cut it into steaks and served it for his lunch. The old man thawed out.

"Reckon ah did see a little cruiser aheadin' for the Inlet," he admitted between mouthfuls, "jes before suppertime, 'twas. An' right behine this cruiser came a big ole shrimp trawler."

"Who's skipper of the trawler?"

Jake scratched his mahogany-colored head. "Ah cain't rightly say, ma'am. Only it had a busted flippah."

Bessie blinked. "A busted flippah?"

"Shore enuff. Port bow was busted in some. Couldn't see the name on her on account of ma eyes ain't what they was."

"Did the trawler kitch up wid the little cruiser?" Bessie asked tersely.

"Long 'bout then," Jake drawled, "ah had a bite. Cotched me a nice grouper fer supper. Sort o' lost int'rest."

(*Continued on page 64*)

HARRIS & EWING

In this mobile direction finder, Radio Intelligence men search out enemy stations.

The Silent War on Radio Spies

BY ROBERT J. LEWIS

Spies have a tough job communicating with their headquarters these days. As soon as an illicit radio station opens up, our men are on the job to run it down

ONE night in the summer of 1940 state police swooped down on a house in the outskirts of Portland, Connecticut. They took up positions at doors and windows. This was to be a round-up of radio spies on a tip from the town's alert citizens.

A few minutes later the state policemen left—their faces red. The men setting up radio equipment inside the house weren't working for a foreign power. They were agents of Uncle Sam's secret service on the air waves, then just being organized as a highly-secret step for national defense.

Those agents were helping to rush to completion a vast network of listening stations in the United States, Hawaii, Alaska, and Puerto Rico. In the years ahead that network was to seal up the country against radio espionage, tighten hemisphere solidarity, and spell out prison for hundreds of enemy spies.

For four years the Radio Intelligence Division of the Federal Communications Commission has been fighting a war behind a war. Its agents have frozen in arctic stations, scorched in the tropics, flown on perilous missions, kept vigil in cars, trains, boats, and even on horseback. They're so expert they can spot a spy by his "fist" as he sends in code. Unheralded, working in silence, they have written one of the most dramatic stories of the war.

These super-sleuths split enemy secrets wide open for as many as a dozen war agencies. Since July, 1940, they've made more than 11,000 investigations and located more than 400 outlaw transmitters. One secret station was tracked straight to the German Embassy in Washington even before it could establish contact with its home station in Germany.

The Radio Intelligence boys have aided in virtually wiping out radio espionage south of the Rio Grande. They've set up Radio Intelligence networks for most Latin-American countries and have trained thirty-four Latin-American engineers from seventeen nations in radio counterespionage techniques. Our decision not to recognize the pro-Axis regime of President Edelmiro Farrell of Argentina was based partly on Radio Intelligence intercepts proving enemy spies were operating from Argentine hideaways.

Today secrecy still hides most of the threads of this vast skein of operations. But the chapters which now can be told add up to a far-reaching victory.

The job of Uncle Sam's Hawkshaws of the Radio Intelligence Division is fantastically complex. These men eavesdrop on radio transmitters at fabulous distances, search out clandestine stations, locate them by direction finders, and intercept intelligence for use of the government.

To handle their assignment they must unlock the secrets chattering through a radio band 300 times wider than you can tune in on the ordinary home receiving set. More than 500,000 stations broadcast in that radio spectrum. United States military transmitters alone total more than 100,000. Our commercial transmitters add up to another 100,000.

Center of this system spanning continents and seas is a map-lined office on the seventh floor of Washington's Benjamin Franklin Post Office Building. The boss is quiet, quick-acting George E. Sterling, chief of the Division. Sterling, a native of Peak Island, Maine, and author of The Radio Manual, a standard textbook, has been a radio bug all his life. At fourteen he was operating a "ham" radio station at his home in Maine. During World War I he was a direction-finding expert with the Signal Corps at the front and at Pershing's headquarters at Chaumont, France. Today, at fifty, he is the acknowledged national authority on tracking down radio spies.

Starting practically from scratch, he laid out the present Radio Intelligence system and traveled thousands of miles to set it up and make it work.

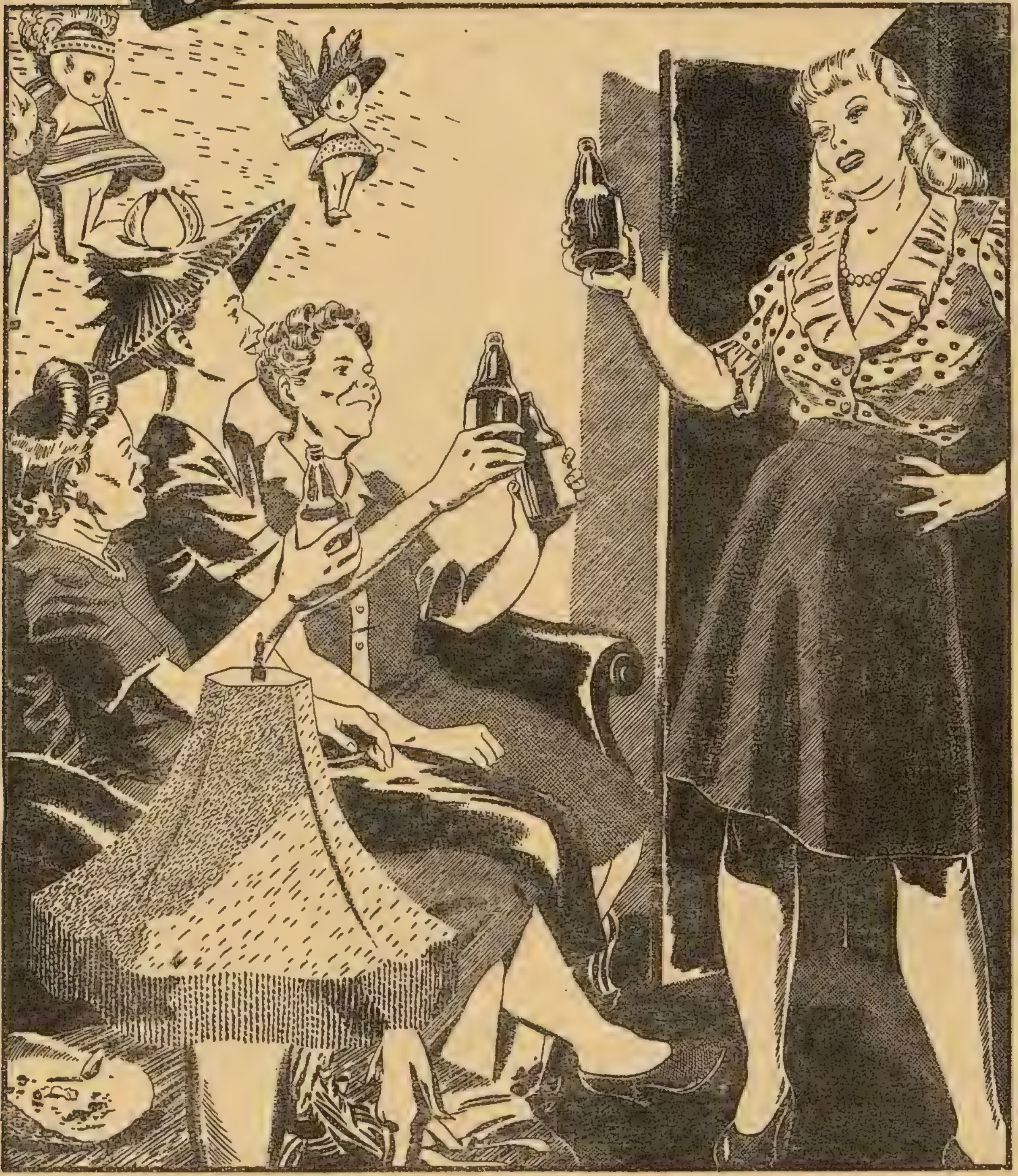
Right after Pearl Harbor two questions plagued the Army and Navy: Would the Jap admirals try to attack the West Coast, Alaska, the Panama Canal? Were there any Jap radio spy stations transmitting information from our shores? Thousands of Japanese short-wave transmitters were being overheard. One or more in this country might even be in contact with the

(Continued on page 63)

As boss of Uncle Sam's radio sleuths, George Sterling keeps spies off the air.

A Liberty BOOK CONDENSATION
READING TIME ONE EVENING

High Time



BY
MARY LASSWELL

The three indomitable old girls who made the country rock with laughter in Miss Lasswell's best seller Suds in Your Eye, are back again in all their glory. As they set out to help win the war, their behavior may not be in accordance with Emily Post, but it's strictly according to Hoyle.

ILLUSTRATED BY WIN HOSKINS

MRS. FEELEY looked around at what was left of her once lavish junk yard. The late Mr. Feeley would have glowed if he could have seen how all the old car bodies and sinks had gone marching off to war.

"Beef on his bones, it woulda been if he was here!" the widow sighed. The wall of beer cans that encircled the junk yard gleamed in the morning sun and Mrs. Feeley ran her hand lovingly over the ice plants that grew out of the top row of cans. She and Old Timer, her workingman, had filled many a lonely hour after Mr. Feeley was "took," building that wall. Mrs. Feeley inherited Old Timer from her husband, too. The old fellow lived in the shed and took his meals with the ladies in the Ark. Mr. Feeley always said no bunch of women alive could get along without some old codger to lean on.

Funny, how the wall had been the means of attracting Miss Tinkham . . . great day it was when that rare spirit had come into their midst. The house, silent for so long, rang gaily with her trills and chortles as she banged the ancient wreck of a piano and sang. The tall bony spinster's genteel and ladylike frocks were a source of satisfaction to the chunky widow, since she herself was not the type for frills and furbelows.

"An' ever since Mrs. Rasmussen moved in with us and done all that fine cookin', my overalls won't hardly button on me no more!" Mrs. Feeley eyed the straining and gaping seams of her faded denim dungarees. Her tubby contours were burgeoning right out of them in several strategic spots.

"They sure been fine friends to me an' kep' me company all right!" Mrs. Feeley was thinking of the doors to new experience that her housemates had opened for her. "They're the salt of the earth, an' no mistake—but we ain't none of us coming through for America! We ain't doin' what we'd ought!" The urge to get busy

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and do her share in the war was so strong upon Mrs. Feeley that she stopped digging in gladioli and went into the house muttering, "It's high time something was did!"

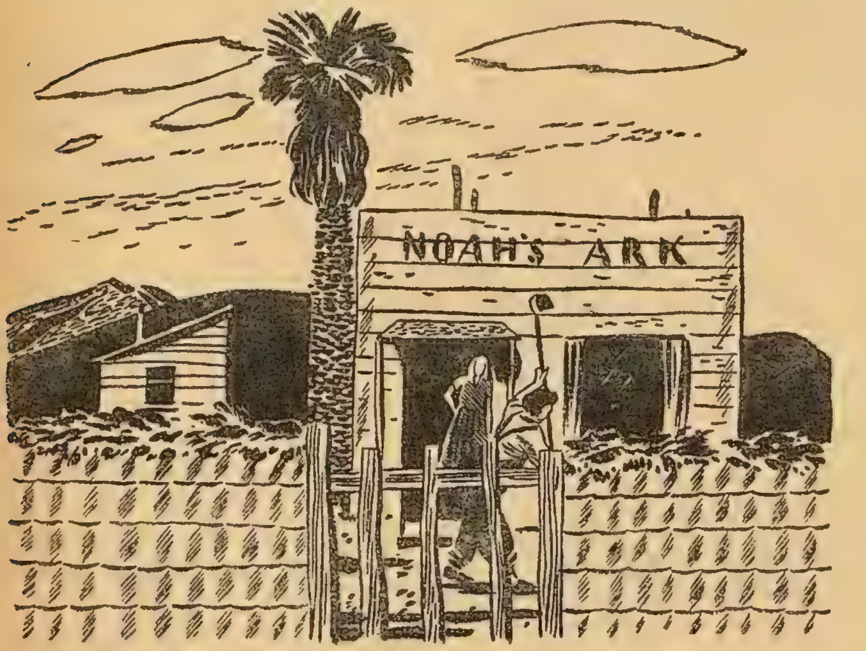
Inside Mrs. Feeley's house, known to all San Diego as Noah's Ark, Miss Tinkham had just finished page four in the book of Marchesi vocal exercises. Flushed with achievement, she sat down to mend her lovely lime-green velvet gloves. She had picked them up for ten cents at the Thrift Shop.

Out of respect for Marchesi, Mrs. Rasmussen had refrained from pounding the flank steak that was to be stuffed and rolled for dinner. As Mrs. Feeley entered the door, Mrs. Rasmussen began to flail the meat mercilessly with a wooden mallet.

"I'm worried!" Mrs. Feeley shouted over the din.

"What about?" Mrs. Rasmussen asked, restraining her muscular arm.

"Us!" Mrs. Feeley said ominously. "Here we sit in the lap o' luxury—not doin' without a thing! In this country we don't even know the war's goin' on!"



"I agree, dear lady!" Miss Tinkham came over and stood by her friends. "Our country has given us so much. . . . 'America, the beautiful!' " she sang.

"An' may I make so bold as to inquire what the hell we're doin' for her?" Mrs. Feeley demanded rhetorically.

Several minutes passed. Miss Tinkham put her hand to her brow and walked the length of the Ark a few times. When she returned to the kitchen table, she had a pencil and piece of paper in her hand. She marked three columns on the paper:

"This is just a point of departure, you understand. In column one we have the most important ways to win the war! First question: Are you a member of the armed forces? Are you in the Army, Navy, or Marine Corps?"

That had them. Not a word was spoken as Miss Tinkham wrote a large and accusing NO in the first column. She went ahead to the next column.

"If not, why not?"

"They don't have no ladies." Mrs. Rasmussen knew the answer to that one.

"My dear, are you forgetting the WACs and the Waves? Such refined types!" Miss Tinkham reminded her.

"We're too old!" Mrs. Feeley shouted with brutal frankness.

"As a matter of fact, I think they were a little too stringent in their qualifications," Miss Tinkham agreed.

She wrote in column two: "Due to ill-considered regulations of these organizations."

"Column three: What are you going to do about it?"

Mrs. Rasmussen was the first to reply.

Long experience had taught her that life at best was but a series of compromises, so she said, "The next best thing!"

Her friends nodded while Miss Tinkham wrote the answer in column three.

"What comes now?" Mrs. Rasmussen asked.

"Are you engaged in actual defense work? Are you making airplanes, guns, or tanks?"

"We ain't," Mrs. Rasmussen said.

"If not, why not?" Miss Tinkham continued.

Mrs. Feeley spoke for all of them: "We ain't tried!"

Blushingly Miss Tinkham wrote in the two columns: "No" in the first one, and "Lack of effort" in the second.

"Well, now—what are we gonna do about it? Ain't that the next question?" Mrs. Feeley prompted.

"Yes, dear ladies," Miss Tinkham agreed. "Our task is to find a way to become essential workers in a vital war industry."

"O. K.! We'll go over to Consocraft in the mornin'! I've always had a yen to be a riveter!" Mrs. Feeley chirped.

"But, my dear," Miss Tinkham fluttered, "such an undertaking! Such responsibility! Do you think we could perform the duties in an airplane factory adequately?"

"Listen. You said we gotta be sensual workers in a vile industry, and what we don't know, they'll learn us!"

"Sensual workers in a vile industry," Mrs. Rasmussen chanted happily. "That's us!" And she went off to pound the steak some more.

AT SIX o'clock the next morning the residents of Noah's Ark were up and stirring. Mrs. Feeley was figuring whether or not they had enough gas left in the truck to take them to the factory, and Mrs. Rasmussen was putting up a hefty lunch consisting of French loaves split lengthwise and stuffed, poor-boy fashion, with a variety of tasty viands.

Miss Tinkham had spent her time arraying herself for the fray. She decided that a white crocheted blouse was just the thing with her coral sharkskin slacks. It was seductive and yet definitely not of the sweater class.

"You don't think it's too décolleté for the factory?" she questioned.

"I shouldn't wonder, but it's got a neat job of air conditionin'!" Mrs. Feeley was eager to get on with the hog killing, but waited politely while Miss Tinkham selected and donned a choker of large black beads carved into the faces of Egyptian mummies.

Mrs. Rasmussen was waiting in the door with the lunch basket.

"C'm'on!" she cried. "Time's a-wastin'! Lemme get that drill press in my hand!"

When the personnel manager at Consocraft looked up from the papers on his desk and saw the triple apparition in front of him, he knew he shouldn't have taken that second helping of Welsh rarebit. If the ladies sounded anything like they looked, he knew he was in for a bad quarter of an hour.

"You see," Miss Tinkham began, "we feel that we are needed by our country in her darkest hour, in her greatest crisis. I might say—"

"Your qualifications?" the manager broke in. Because he was a nice kindly soul he refrained from adding, "if any." Daily he interviewed hundreds of applicants—old people, unfit people, people who had never been trained to do work of any kind. He reduced them all to their lowest common denominator, the one thing they all had in common: a burning desire to help win the war. These three seemed extraordinarily likable to the manager, in spite of their rather weird looks. And because they looked like such good old skates, it was twice as hard for him to give them the mercy shot.

"You have, of course, birth certificates?" he asked solemnly.

"What good's birth certificates?" Mrs. Feeley asked.

"They prove that you were actually born, where you were born, and, most important of all, when you were born," he explained.

Mrs. Rasmussen said gravely, "Most of us don't remember where we was born. We was too young!"

The manager opened his mouth to speak, but no sound came out. Mrs. Feeley filled the blank space for him.

"An' long as you're askin' damn fool questions, you had oughta ask *why* we was born! Although, by the looks o' you, I expect you was a incubator chick yourself! C'm'on, ladies. It's plain to see we're not wanted here!"

She turned and strode out, followed by her two friends.

Nobody spoke for several minutes; the ladies just sort of slouched along the walls of the factory until they came to the place where the truck was parked.

Miss Tinkham examined her face in a small mirror. "I shall certainly report this indignity in a personal letter to Mrs. Roosevelt."

"Have a bite?" Mrs. Rasmussen said, dragging out one of the loaves.

"Could I be mistaken, or is that a beer sign down there?" Remarkably keen eyesight Miss Tinkham had on occasion.

"Yeah! An' I'm gonna go get us some!" Mrs. Rasmussen said, clambering down the other side of the truck. In her haste she almost stepped on a squat swarthy woman in overalls who was sitting on the running board of the truck, eating a sandwich.

"An' you think you got trouble!" the woman said.

"Well, if we ain't, who the hell has?" Mrs. Feeley asked, sticking her head out over the side of the truck to get a look at the speaker.

"I'm afraid I haven't the honor of your acquaintance," Miss Tinkham began, seething inwardly because she had left her lorgnette at home.

"You can drop your vi'lets, lady! I was just borryin' the side o' the truck here—I'm Lily."

"Well, you look like you'd just lost your last friend," Mrs. Feeley conceded.

"Jeez! You'd cry, too, if you was about to lose the best job you ever had!"

"Our trouble ain't losin' no job; it's gettin' one!" Mrs. Rasmussen said glumly.

Miss Tinkham related the run-in they had had with the personnel manager. Mrs. Rasmussen inquired, "What'd you mean when you said could you only keep your job here? They ain't gonna fire you?"

"Naw! Nothin' like that!" Lily replied. "I'm one o' their top 'lectric drill-press operators. It's my kids!"

"What about 'em?" Mrs. Rasmussen asked.

"My kid sister was takin' care of 'em for me, an' if she ain't went an' joined them WACs! She's leavin' tomorra an' you can't get no help for love or money! An' their old man off in the Solomons! Wouldn't be so bad if it was only one, but on account o' them bein' twins, people backs off from 'em—figgers it's double trouble!"

"How old are they?" Miss Tinkham asked politely.

"Six months," their mother said.

"Boys or girls?" Mrs. Rasmussen queried.

"Boys: Franklin and Winston."

Mrs. Feeley and Mrs. Rasmussen looked at each other, then at Miss Tinkham. She had a dreamy look on her face.

"Remember the column heading you contributed, Mrs. Rasmussen—'The next best thing'?" Miss Tinkham reminded.

"Well, I can tell you it's sure lots harder'n drillin' holes or packin' fish is." Mrs. Rasmussen was recalling bygone days with her grandchildren.

"It'd sure be a sacrifice, all right!" Mrs. Feeley admitted.

"Assuming, of course, that we would be capable of undertaking the care and feeding of infants," Miss Tinkham amended.

Lily was beginning to get the drift.

"Boy, oh boy! I'd sure make it worth your while! I'd pay good! And bring the formula all ready to last 'em through the day. Would fifteen dollars a week be O. K.?"

The ladies looked at one another. "Well, I'll tell you," Mrs. Feeley announced. "We'll go home an' drink it over. You stop by on your way home for the answer."

After making sure of the exact location of the Ark, Lily said, "Then I'll not ask for no time off till I talk to youse tonight!"

The ladies nodded solemnly and drove off toward Island Avenue.

AT SIX o'clock Lily came up the walk with a hopeful expression.

"What time will you bring 'em?" Mrs. Feeley demanded.

"I gotta be there at eight. Is seven thirty too early?"

"That ain't the question! This ain't bein' done to accommodate us, you understand! If you pass here at seven thirty, that's the time you gotta drop 'em off!" said Mrs. Feeley.

"O. K.!" Lily grinned. "I'll bring the formula, an' the boiled water, an' the orange juice, an' the pab'lum."

She was fumbling in her pocket.

"I don't wanna insult youse or nothin', but I wanna give five dollars now to bind the bargain. I'll just owe that much less at the end o' the week."

Mrs. Feeley took the fin and handed it to Mrs. Rasmussen.

"O. K., Lily. Bring 'em in the mornin'! Don't you forget: this is strictly at your own risk! We ain't responsible for nothin' but keepin' 'em fed an' changed an' from swallowin' safety pins!" Mrs. Feeley admonished.

Lily nodded and departed hastily before the ladies should change their minds.

Mrs. Feeley looked at the money and remarked, "Once them twins is installed here, we'll be so wore out we won't be good for nothin'. So let's go out tonight."

THE three friends entered the Pacific Gardens about midnight. The huge pleasure dome housed a large bar, enormous dance floor, and a bowling alley.

"But what a change the war has brought!" Miss Tinkham lamented, referring to the women clad in slacks and the men without coats. And she ruffled the frills of her beaded georgette dress smugly.

"Yeup! This town sure ain't what it used to be," Mrs. Feeley agreed. "Was a classy bunch in these joints a few years back, but they sure ain't nothin' but rat races now! Hardly no reg'lar Navy!"

"After all, dear ladies," Miss Tinkham said kindly, "the important thing is not whether they are regular Navy or not; what counts is whether they are regular fellows or not!"

The ladies were about to air their views on the Naval Reserve when Mrs. Feeley noticed something out of order in a corner.

"Hey! Looky there! That guy's abusin' that girl something fierce!" She pointed to a booth near by where a short swarthy man with pockmarks was threatening a buxom platinum blonde with his fist. They could not hear what he was saying, but they saw him take her by the wrist and begin twisting her arm. Such brutality was more than the residents of Noah's Ark could bear. With one accord they rose, taking their beer with them, and walked over to the booth.

"Ain't he gettin' a mite too familiar, girlie?" Mrs. Feeley asked.

"Look, Toots! Don't come buttin' in where you ain't wanted!" the man said menacingly.

"I don't believe I have the pleasure of your acquaintance!" Mrs. Feeley replied coolly, doubling up her fist.

"Just go ahead an' peddle your papers!" Here he made the mistake of shoving her.

Mrs. Rasmussen and Miss Tinkham looked at each other.

"Did you see what I seen, Miss Tinkham dear?" Mrs. Rasmussen was the first to break the silence.

"I am afraid I did," Miss Tinkham replied sadly.

With one accord the ladies set their beer mugs on the table. Then, with a movement like greased lightning, they seized the flabbergasted man by the ankles, turned him upside down, and began to bang his head against the floor. Mrs. Feeley recovered sufficiently to grab him by the seat of the pants with both hands. The ladies used him like an old-fashioned churn dasher for the space of some three minutes. He wriggled and roared, but to no avail.

All at once a triumphant shriek split the air. Mrs. Feeley was the author of it, and she deigned to turn loose her grip on his pants.

"Just like I thought!" she shouted, and straightened up from the floor with a roll of bills in her hand.

"Dirty liar!" she yelled, shaking the money in his face. "Ain't you the stinker! Ain't you ashamed o' yourself! Had it all the time! An' you was tryin' to shake her down!" Mrs. Feeley's voice rose as she warmed to her subject.

The man had resumed an upright position after the ladies dropped him with scant ceremony at Mrs. Feeley's first gloating shriek. He was about to efface himself when Mrs. Rasmussen grabbed him by the sleeve.

"What about the lady's feelin's?"

"I 'pologize," the fellow mumbled.

"You'll have to do better'n that," his tormentor continued. "Take at least a sawbuck to soothe her feelin's!"

The man peeled off a ten-dollar bill and threw it in front of the girl. He was sweating and glad to leave.

"Whew!" Mrs. Feeley said, sitting down in the booth. "Guess you're glad we come along," she said brightly.

"I don't know what would of happened without you," the girl smiled gratefully. "We all need a drink after that! You ladies sit down, all of you!" she invited graciously.

"I am Miss Agnes Harriet Tinkham and this is Mrs. Rasmussen. The lady beside you is Mrs. Feeley," said Miss Tinkham, ever mindful of the amenities.

"I'm Darleen, and I'm sure pleased to become acquainted with you. Will you have some more of the same?" she inquired, as the waiter stood ready to take their order. The ladies nodded.

"Three large beers and a limeade!" Darleen ordered. "He wouldn't of had the crust if my boy friend was here. He don't approve of me working here, but I get lonely looking at the four walls with him away so much."

"He in the Navy?" Mrs. Feeley asked.

"Unh-huh!" the girl shook her head. "Merchant marine. I don't have nothin' to do with any of my gentlemen friends at all when Johnny's in port.

"I tell them flat out: don't go calling me up at all. I'm out of circulation."

Miss Tinkham cleared her throat. "Your fiancé, I take it?"

"Not exactly," Darleen replied.

"You an' him fixin' to marry?" Mrs. Feeley asked.

"I don't know. I don't think we're the marrying type. I meet so many nice-looking fellows, and I get kinda sentimental thinking about them being shot at and killed, and I suppose I just listen to them too much!" Darleen looked dreamy.

No one spoke for a while. Then Mrs. Feeley asked: "This here Johnny—don't you think about him gettin' shot at none?"

"Oh, sure! He's been torpedoed three times already! He was bringing me a silver-fox fur from Russia and it was lost with the ship. It was just as well, though. Like I was telling him, one isn't stylish any more. They wear a pair now!"

"Does he know you got other fellers?" Mrs. Rasmussen asked.

"Yes, I told him all about me. See, when he's here I'm strictly true to him. Only he isn't here much."

THE ladies looked at one another. Darleen had apparently never got the word about right and wrong. "Well," Mrs. Feeley said at last, "I guess it's all in how you look at it."

"The inferiority complex manifests itself in many forms," Miss Tinkham remarked to no one in particular.

Mrs. Feeley lifted her glass to that sentiment, even if she didn't know what it meant.

"You know what?" Darleen asked suddenly. "I'm hungry."

"Well, this ain't no place to eat," Mrs. Feeley said. "Get the hog cholera eatin' in a pigsty like this."

"It isn't at all appetizing, is it?" Miss Tinkham agreed.

"It's two o'clock now—an' them brats comin' in the mornin'! What say we take her home with us an' scrape her up a bite?" Mrs. Rasmussen queried.

They thought it was a fine idea—hadn't realized how hungry they all were.

Darleen went over to the cashier, turned in the checks from the drinks that had been bought for her during the evening, and counted her dance-ticket stubs for her percentage on the evening's work. She pulled out a small notebook from a white leatherette bag shaped like a toy drum; in this notebook the cashier recorded the figures and initialed them.

"O. K.! We can go now," Darleen said to the ladies.

After a five-minute walk Noah's Ark hove into view, its beer-can wall shimmering like gold in the moonlight.

"This is where we lives at!" Mrs. Feeley said.

Miss Tinkham recited:

" 'Who enters through this friendly gate,
Comes never too early nor stays too late'!"

"It ain't always nasty neat, but it's a grand house for eatin'!" Mrs. Rasmussen put in.

"Gee! It's sure swell, isn't it?" Darleen was awe-struck by the rose-velvet draperies that formed the private rooms of the ladies. "Sure cozy, isn't it?"

Mrs. Rasmussen set out the remains of a peppery cheese mix, a green salad, rye hardtack, and rollmops. Darleen inhaled the fragrance of her coffee while Mrs. Rasmussen piled a huge amount of food on her plate.

"Don't you never fix no lunches for your feller?" she asked, between bites.

"We generally go down for chop suey," Darleen said.

"Chop suey!" Mrs. Feeley cried, looking at her friends in horror. "How in hell can a man keep up his strength on chop suey? The Navy wants steak an' eggs! An' apple pie, second!"

"Johnny likes that, too," Darleen admitted.

"WOULDN'T it be delightful if you could master the culinary art before he returns?" Miss Tinkham mused. "Such a pretty domestic scene! Home is the sailor, home from the sea—and the beloved broiling hamburgers!"

"Yeah. I could learn you," Mrs. Rasmussen agreed.

"I can fix creamed chipped beef and goldenrod eggs," Darleen stated modestly.

A pained expression passed over the ladies' faces.

"You had oughta know how to cook any kind o' meat real good, an' how to cook eggs so they ain't leathery, an' how to cook with cheese. If you could make a real good French dressin', hot biscuits, an' a decent apple pie, you could hold your man, I don't care how big a Ike he thinks he is!" Mrs. Rasmussen stated.

"I'd try hard if you'd show me!" Darleen promised.

"Gawdlemighty!" Mrs. Feeley shouted. "It's three o'clock in the mornin'! Them twins will be here in four hours!"

"What twins?" Darleen asked, eying the ladies closely.

Mrs. Feeley explained wearily.

"Well, I gotta go and let you ladies get some rest! I'm proud of knowing someone like you ladies!"

Next morning Lily came up the steps pushing a wide canvas double stroller in which reposed, side by side, two enormous apple-dumpling babies. They were fast asleep, their dimpled arms and little hands like starfish spread out to the breeze. Their eyelashes made lovely shadows on the rosy cheeks.

Mrs. Rasmussen opened the door and helped Lily lift the carriage up the last step and into the house.

"Which is Franklin and which is Winston?" Miss Tinkham inquired.

"They got 'nitials on their clothes, but it's hard to tell now on account o' they just got on diapers—but it really don't make no difference! They can't understand what you say to 'em nohow!" Lily explained.

"Now, by rights," Mrs. Feeley said, "this here feller oughta be Winston—ain't nothin' missin' but the bow tie an' cigar!"

The ladies stared silently at the cherubs while Lily went to the car and came back carrying a huge picnic basket with double handles. In the other hand she carried a large cardboard suitcase and a canvas laundry bag.

"These here oughta go right on the ice," she said, opening the picnic basket and removing the bottles of formula, boiled water, and orange juice. "Now, to heat the bottles, you just stand 'em up in a pan o' warm water an' let 'em—"

"Aw, go teach your grandmother how to suck eggs!" Mrs. Rasmussen grinned, shoving Lily out the door. Lily took one lingering glance at her progeny.

"They ain't bad! Honest, they ain't!"

"Do you suppose I dare pick one up?" Miss Tinkham asked before the door of Lily's jaloppy had slammed.

"Let sleepin' dogs lie!" Mrs. Feeley advised grimly.

"They'll wake soon enough," Mrs. Rasmussen said from the icebox, where she was putting away the twins' food. "We might's well lie down a minute till they do start howlin'—didn't get near enough sleep last night. That Darleen was sure a pleasant girl, though. I like her hair."

"Yeup. One o' them incendiary blondes! I feel kinda sorry for them little ole trollops—never had much chance. She's sure a dope, foolin' around with them other guys long as she has a steady feller. But they ain't got no brains! Outa sight, outa mind!" Mrs. Feeley said. "Our duty's plain as the nose on your face: we gotta make her think more of herself! Bet she figgers Johnny is doin' the same. We gotta get her somebody to believe in!"

"At any rate, hers is not the sin of coldness and indifference," Miss Tinkham remarked.

"I'll say this for her," Mrs. Rasmussen put in, "she's clean as a new pin. I took notice o' them shoulder straps on her slip an' they was clean—ironed, too!" Cleanliness and godliness walked abreast for Mrs. Rasmussen.

"She bought us, anyways, six beers apiece. She ain't tight!" Mrs. Feeley reminded.

It was exactly two hours and ten minutes before the air was rent with the shrill and jagged squealing of the two hungry infants. The three ladies leaped to their feet as if a time bomb had gone off under their beds.

"Light that fire under the pan o' water on the stove. It's their ten-o'clock bottle they're yellin' for!" Mrs. Rasmussen explained.

At two o'clock the slumbering afternoon was shattered by the hungry cries of the lusty babes. Mrs. Feeley remarked that they could just as well throw away the alarm clock. When the twins were bedded down once more, Mrs. Rasmussen went ahead with her preparations for supper. Mrs. Feeley went into the garden to weed, and Miss Tinkham sat down to restring some beads. Each was occupied with her own thoughts. At five they congregated in the rockers to discuss the events of the day.

The radio was playing softly, Miss Tinkham had filled the bowls with fresh flowers, and the odor of Mrs. Rasmussen's incomparable cooking filled the air. The ladies rocked gently in time to the music.

Finally Mrs. Rasmussen spoke: "Them's the best kids I ever seen—they ain't got a nerve in their body. Eat an' sleep! Sleep an' eat!" She got up to examine the contents of a large iron pot on the fire. In it reposed the big end of a ham hock, whole peeled onions, scrubbed new carrots, tiny ruby beets, bundles of green beans, and a bouquet of parsley, celery, and hot green pepper. Whole black peppercorns were sprinkled here and there. The tender green cabbage was cut into wedges ready to go into the pot the last fifteen minutes. Mrs. Rasmussen looked at the contents of the pot with the loving care of an artist, and she moved one beet that had dropped out of focus in her still-life composition. Mrs. Feeley and Miss Tinkham came over and took a peek.

"Don't take a bit more work to do it up nice," the cook said modestly. "Guess I'll just mix up some hot mustard to go with it!" Nobody ever had mustard like Mrs. Rasmussen's: it was hot and cold, sweet and sour, fiery and bland—all at the same time. She filled the mustard pot and set it in the icebox. Then she filled a second jar with her own tomato catchup. At the table she would pour the mustard and fragrant catchup into individual glass dishes. With one quick swirl of the spoon she could make the scarlet and gold run into a lovely pattern, but never smear or mix. Miss Tinkham loved to watch Mrs. Rasmussen fix the sauce dishes. The Noah's Arkies would dip morsels of vegetables and ham into the sauce before eating them. It certainly went well with beer.

On the stroke of six the boys started bellowing. The ladies performed what was by now a simple task for them. They were starting the orange juice when Lily appeared. She seemed doubtful about coming in, but when she saw the expressions on their faces she grinned.

ONE Friday afternoon the three friends sat waiting for the boys to wake up and demand their six o'clock bottles. They heard a step and looked up to see Darleen on the stoop.

"You finally remembered where we live at!" Mrs. Feeley cried jovially. "C'm'on in!"

"Sure thought you'd forgot us," Mrs. Rasmussen said, eying Darleen's long platinum-blonde page-boy bob.

Darleen sat down and handed Mrs. Rasmussen a paper bag. "I thought a pound of coffee would be a nice thing to have around the house—after all I drank the other night!"

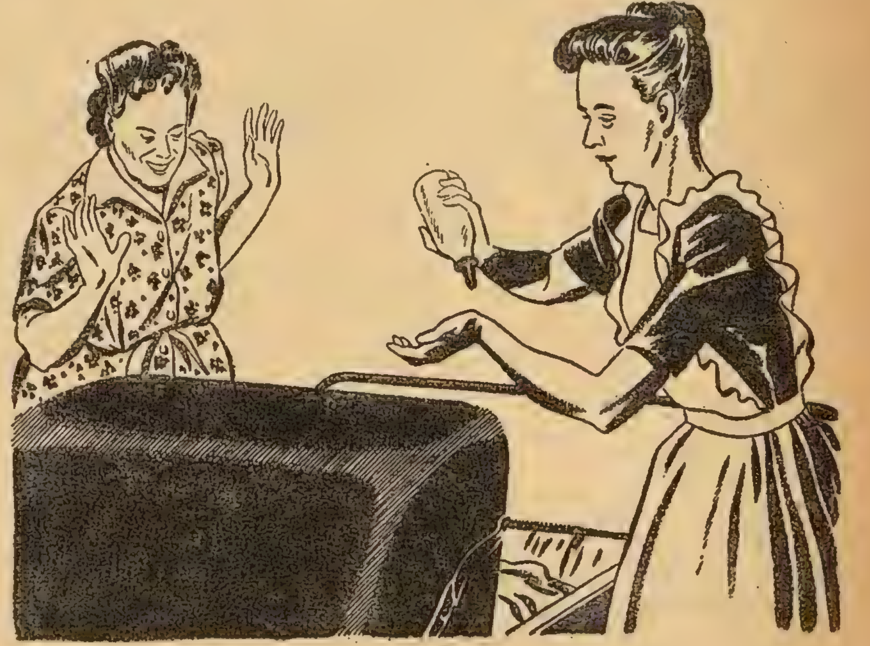
Mrs. Rasmussen was delighted.

"What you been up to here lately?" Mrs. Feeley asked.

"Nothing much!" Darleen replied. "But I hadn't saw you ladies in the café lately, so I came to pay my party call!"

"Delightful of you to observe the amenities, my dear! So few give any thought to good form these degenerate days!" Miss Tinkham said. "But I observed at once that you were definitely a genteel type!"

Darleen could hardly believe her ears; she smiled gratefully at Miss Tinkham.



"I'd make you a cuppa cawfee," Mrs. Rasmussen said, "only it'd kinda dull your edge for supper—you got time to stay, don't you?"

"Well, if you're sure I wouldn't be imposing!"

"Gawd, no!" Mrs. Feeley said. "We wouldn't never ask you if we didn't want you!"

"What I really have came about was tomorrow. I got a night off and I'd like to entertain you ladies up to my room. It's not luxurious like this here, but I like to have company—ladies, I mean. Us girls don't often get a opportunity to be friends with ladies like you. Johnny would think it was fine, me being able to say I know you."

"Now that's very handsome of you, I'd say!" Mrs. Feeley said cordially.

"We ain't been no place lately," Mrs. Rasmussen seconded.

"Perfectly charming of you, my dear! We'll be delighted to accept."

Miss Tinkham had scarcely spoken when the Ark was filled with a wail that resembled nothing so much as the cry of the African hyena in mating time. Darleen jumped from her chair as if she had been shot out of a gun. "What was it?" she asked.

"Franklin an' Winston," Mrs. Feeley chuckled.

When she had recovered from the shock, Darleen went over and stood beside Mrs. Feeley, who had dived for the diaper bag and laid the lads on the table.

"They're sure beautiful," she sighed.

"Good, too!" Mrs. Feeley bragged. "You didn't know they was in the house till they let off that blast right behind you, now, did you?"

"I sure didn't," Darleen admitted. "Could I?" she begged, holding out her arms.

"Sure!" Mrs. Feeley could afford to be gracious. Didn't she have them all week?

Darleen sat down in the rocker with one of the boys. Instead of kicking and screaming lustily for his bottle, the baby squirmed around on her lap until he could get his arms around her neck. She whuffled softly into the creases of his fat neck and he squealed happily.

"Now ain't that a pretty sight?" said Mrs. Rasmussen, coming up with the bottles. She took the other baby from

Mrs. Feeley and sat down near Darleen to feed him. She gave Darleen the other bottle.

"Here! Shove this in his musket!"

Darleen did and the baby sighed blissfully.

Miss Tinkham came up with the second and third courses on a tray.

"Isn't it marvelous how they know instinctively who loves them? Darleen, at this moment you are a perfect Botticelli Madonna!" Miss Tinkham contemplated the picture, enraptured.

Darleen knew what a Madonna was, anyway.

"I was always good with the littlest ones at the Orphan Home," she explained.

"What you need is a good steady man an' a houseful o' your own sprouts!" Mrs. Rasmussen said solemnly.

"Gawd, yes!" Mrs. Feeley added. "Ain't nothin' like a good husband an' a pack o' house apes to settle a girl down!"

Darleen laughed good-naturedly.

"Just think, my dear: it might resemble you, a lovely golden-haired cherub!" Miss Tinkham added her powers of persuasion.

"It's only right I should tell you my hair wasn't exactly this color to start out with—I have it touched up with a heavy rinse," Darleen confessed.

"Gilding the lily, my dear! And it is certainly most becoming!" Miss Tinkham was wondering if she should try some heavy rinse again. The last time she did most of it had come off on the inside of her white lace picture hat.

THE twins had finished supper and were all ready for their mother to take them home. Darleen was holding them both on her lap. They crawled over her, swarming like monkeys.

Suddenly she giggled and said, "My goodness! Men are all alike! One of these fellows has roaming hands!"

One of the twins was apparently seeking further refreshment. The ladies laughed gleefully.

"That's what you get for bein' young an' good-lookin'! They ain't never tried nothin' like that on us!" Mrs. Feeley cackled.

Just then Lily came in and bundled the boys off in their carriage. The ladies got busy putting supper on the table, and Darleen wandered around the front part of the room looking at pictures. After a while she settled into a wistful silence.

"Our Darleen's in a brown study! Thinking of the beloved, no doubt!" Miss Tinkham said. "That lucky Johnny! I hope you'll pardon the familiarity, but I feel as if I knew the dear boy already! I am willing to wager we shall hear the chime of wedding bells before the year is out!"

Darleen waved a deprecating hand.

"Johnny's got ideels! He wouldn't marry me!"

"Well, he sure as hell won't, unless you start actin' like you thought he would!" Mrs. Feeley said positively.

"Course," Mrs. Rasmussen added, "you couldn't just jump into it an' go on playin' the field like you been doin'. Once you was hitched with the bell an' the book you'd sure have to cut out all them other guys!"

"I know that!" Darleen agreed. "Bein' married is sure a sacred thing, awful big responsibility. I've had a few chances, but I knew the guys had their fingers crossed and expected me to have mine crossed too! But I wouldn't play the game that way. If I ever give that step, it'll be for good and always—that's why I couldn't give the step unless I felt sure I could make the grade!"

"An admirable attitude!" Miss Tinkham said.

"But you do like this here Johnny better'n them others, don't you?" Mrs. Feeley probed.

"Oh, sure! I love Johnny. Him and me get along swell! You wouldn't guess he was no merchant sailor—no torpedo target, he calls it. He looks almost like a college boy except for a few tattoos, and they aren't noticeable with his clothes on."

"We sure wanna make his acquaintance the next time he comes in," Mrs. Feeley said cordially.

"Would it be all right?" Darleen asked incredulously.

"I'd like to know why not!" Mrs. Feeley exclaimed.

"Well, I just thought— Gee, I got to go now! I'm almost late for work." Darleen looked at a fancy wrist watch worn nearer to the elbow than the wrist.

"Johnny give you that?" Mrs. Feeley asked.

Darleen nodded.

"My! He sure thinks a lot of you!" Mrs. Rasmussen said admiringly.

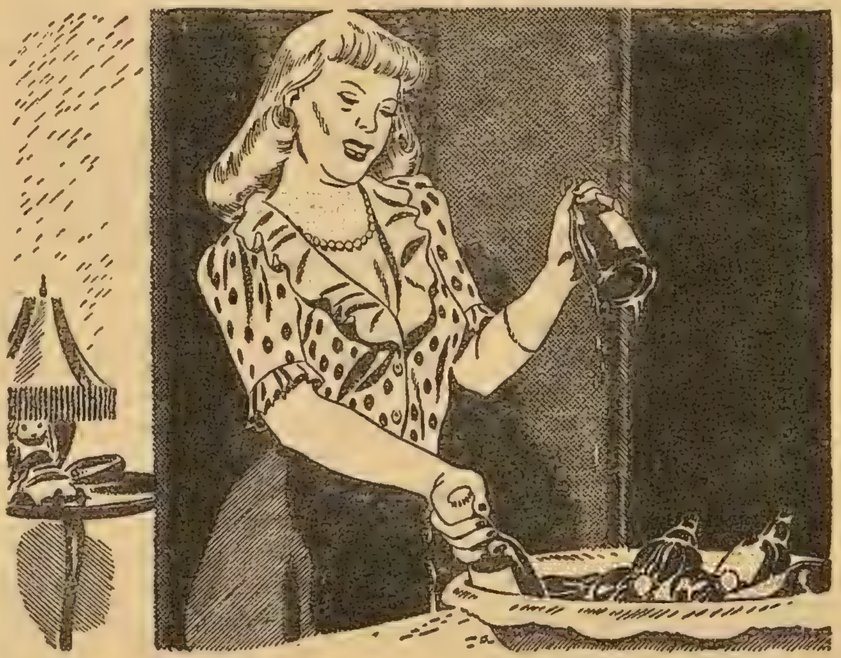
Darleen was actually beginning to think he did, at that.

Saturday night the ladies set out from Noah's Ark about half past eight. In honor of the occasion Mrs. Feeley had on a cool dimity dress and her nice canvas pumps that she kept for best. Mrs. Rasmussen wore a neat blue-and-white-striped seersucker. Her sausage curls were arranged with geometrical exactness. Miss Tinkham had gone all out for glamor and wore her best rayon knit suit. The skirt was a good sixteen inches longer than the current fashion, but the bright green material was so handsome! The sweater top was a dazzling affair embroidered in sequins and crystal beads. Although Mrs. Feeley and Mrs. Rasmussen were bareheaded, Miss Tinkham could not forego the final touch, a handsome picture hat made of accordion-pleated Kelly-green lace. Looking out from under it, Miss Tinkham reminded Mrs. Rasmussen of a frog peeking out from under a lily pad.

"Yessir!" Mrs. Rasmussen said. "I got just what that hat's needin'!" She came out of her room with a large wax-coated artificial water lily in her hand. She used to float it in a dish of water when she had company.

"Perfect!" Miss Tinkham breathed, and proceeded to anchor the lily with a large safety pin.

The ladies walked along Island Avenue, well pleased with the world and one another. Soon they were climbing the steps of a building marked "Fleet Rooms."



When the door opened in answer to their ring, the ladies remained speechless at the apparition before them. The woman who opened the door was a fat, redheaded, freckle-faced mulatto with gold teeth.

"What did you want?" she asked in a not-too-cordial voice.

While the ladies were still gasping for air, they heard Darleen's voice from over the edge of the staircase:

"It's all right, Mabel! They're my company!"

Darleen ran down and escorted the ladies up the stairs. They did not say a word until they were safely inside Darleen's room.

"Ain't you scared outa your wits to stay here?" Mrs. Feeley asked, looking around her.

Darleen pointed to the heavy iron bolt on the door and the Yale lock, her own addition. The only window in the room opened over the street, and Darleen explained that if any funny stuff started she would only have to stick her head out of the window and holler for the patrol.

She went behind the screen that concealed the "running water in every room." The wash-hand basin was full of bottles of beer packed in ice, the whole thing neatly covered with a towel.

The ladies hoisted their bottles in salute to Darleen's hospitality. They thought the room was very pleasant.

Her boy friends must have all been hell-on-wheels at carnivals, for her room was filled with feather-dressed Kewpie dolls, bead-fringed lamps, and long slinky-legged French dolls. Darleen smoothed the lavender taffeta bedspread with pride.

"Johnny won this for me on the wheel of fortune at the carnival. The man said it didn't stop on the right number, but Johnny had quite a few of his oilers with him from the ship—and they persuaded him a little."

Mrs. Feeley and her friends admired the bedspread and the dolls. Suddenly Darleen had an inspiration. She opened the door of her clothes closet and hauled down a huge cardboard box.

"I knew I had something I wanted to give you!" she said, turning to Mrs. Rasmussen. "Johnny won it."

The ladies crowded around as Darleen unpacked something large and gleaming. It was an aluminum pressure cooker.

Mrs. Rasmussen's eyes popped out on her face like a sand crab's.

"Them costs every bit of twenty dollars—an' a priority! You ain't aimin' to give that away?"

"Johnny only paid a quarter for the chance—and I wouldn't never use it in a million years," Darleen said. "I don't even know how you use it," she confessed. "But I'd be proud for you to accept it!"

Mrs. Rasmussen was speechless. She had longed to own a pressure cooker. Not that she couldn't cook things tender with a good slow fire! But there was something aristocratic about having your own pressure cooker.

"A magnificent bit of apparatus!" Miss Tinkham said.

"You will take it, won't you?" Darleen coaxed.

"You had oughta let us buy it from you," Mrs. Feeley said at length.

"It isn't for sale," Darleen said firmly. "It is a small token of the respect and esteem—" Darleen's carefully thought-out speech broke down in the middle. "It's on account of you-all being so good to me and me so proud that you'll let me associate with you! You got to keep it!" she finished in a spurt. "You can cook stuff for the twins in it!"

Since it was offered in the name of the twins, the ladies saw no way to refuse the gift gracefully. Especially since they were dying to accept it.

"We sure thank you!" was the best Mrs. Rasmussen could do. But she made a silent vow to teach Darleen all there was to know about cookery, from artichokes to zucchini.

"Let's have some music," Darleen said brightly, and turned on her record player. The ladies listened blissfully to Why Don't You Do Right? and Darleen set up more beer. She simply could not do enough to entertain her distinguished guests. She opened a bag of salted peanuts and passed them around. Mrs. Feeley took a handful and grinned up at Darleen.

"I ain't got no teeth, but I can sure gum hell out of 'em!"

MISS TINKHAM breathed deeply and voluptuously when Darleen lit the incense burner. This was really a lovely soirée—the beers were beginning to take effect.

"The blessing of friends!" she cried. "We have received nothing better from the immortal gods, nothing more delightful!"

The phonograph was automatic and the ladies admired it enormously; you didn't have to hop up and down every minute to change it. And nobody whanging away at you every two minutes, like those announcers on the radio.

The four women were sitting in blissful enjoyment when a sharp bell rang. Darleen went to her bedside and removed an ornate doll from the telephone. The ladies looked at one another in amazement: her own telephone right by her bed! They tried politely not to hear the conversation, but the room was not large.

"No, the ship isn't in," Darleen said.

"I'm not at home," she said to her invisible *vis-à-vis*. . . . "I don't care! I'm not at home! . . . No—it won't do you no good to call back later," Darleen said into the telephone and hung up. "Honestly, these men won't hardly give a lady no peace!"

"No couth! They ain't got no couth at all!" Mrs. Feeley said. "You sure got him told, though!"

Darleen basked in the approving smiles of her guests. She glanced at her watch—they would have to hurry to carry out all that she had planned for their entertainment. It was funny how the hours flew when you were with congenial people. Her feet would have been awfully sore by this time if she had been at work.

"Now see," she explained to her guests, "on account of me not knowing how to cook, or having no kitchen privileges if I did, I done the best I knew how, and ordered us all a nice shore dinner for ten o'clock down to the Red Sails in the Sunset Inn. It's a classy joint! The taxi will be here in a few minutes. In case you'd like to fix your face or anything, it's right down the hall." And she led the way.

"I can see you entertain royally when you do entertain," Miss Tinkham beamed as she went out the door.

Darleen came back and fixed her hair before the mirror and the ladies stood around admiring her. Mrs. Rasmussen took notice of just how she did it.

SUDDENLY a terrific uproar came from the next room. Glasses or bottles crashed and dishes smashed on the floor. Hair-raising shrieks and yells nearly shook the walls down.

The residents of Noah's Ark looked questioningly at Darleen.

"It's Pierpont and Myrna!" she sighed.

"It's which?" Mrs. Feeley asked.

"C'm'on! I'll show you," Darleen said wearily and led the ladies down the hall. She opened the door next to her own and the ladies saw a small wizened face appear. It belonged to a boy four or possibly five years old. His bullet head was covered with a shaggy black thatch. His eyes were green and slanty, and his sharp peaked features were spattered with big jagged freckles.

"What's the matter with Myrna?" Darleen demanded, shoving her foot in the door. The ladies stayed right behind her and they all went in.

"All that noise come outa them two mites?" Mrs. Rasmussen gasped, pointing at Pierpont and Myrna—aged three. Pierpont's sister was microscopic, with short wiry red curls all over her head. She had a long upper lip and an outthrust lower lip. Her eyes were like two blueberries in a muffin.

"Such lovely curls," Miss Tinkham said, and put out her hand to touch them. Myrna promptly sank her teeth in Miss Tinkham's wrist.

"What was you yelling for?" Darleen insisted, as Miss Tinkham nursed her wrist.

"Myrna won't eat her cherry oats!" Pierpont snarled. "She wants sweet milk! 'Cause the milk was sour she got mad an' broke the bottle! Now we won't get the nickel!"

"Wanna hot dog! Wanna hot dog!" Myrna chanted.

"Where's your mom?" Darleen demanded. "You mean it's ten o'clock and you haven't ate yet?"

Pierpont shook his head.

"Mrs. Feeley, will you ladies wait in my room just a minute while I run down to the corner for a bottle of milk? I sure hate this inconvenience to arise, but I'll tell the taxicab to wait!"

The ladies followed Darleen back to her room, looking over their shoulders nervously at the occupants of the next room.

"There's a couple of beers left. You split 'em till I get back," Darleen said as she left the room.

A few sips restored the equilibrium of the Noah's Arkies.

"Regular varmints, them two," Mrs. Rasmussen said. "Wonder how come the Children's Society ain't got 'em?"

"I wonder!" Mrs. Feeley mused. "Sure can't have much of a mother!"

Darleen returned with the milk, and the ladies followed her into the next room to watch.

Pierpont took two dishes and climbed up on a chair and washed them in the washbasin. Then he brought them back to the rickety card table, filled the bowls with dry cereal and poured some milk on it. He sprinkled sugar on top from a torn paper bag. Myrna had already climbed up on a chair and was spooning away greedily. Pierpont dived in too.

"Now, you-all go right to bed the minute you finish, you hear?" Darleen admonished. "Don't try to wait up for your mom! C'm'on, ladies; our taxi is waiting!" she said, and they all went downstairs.

THE three ladies and Darleen sailed wing and wing into the cozy rose-lighted Inn. Mrs. Feeley looked at her friends and moved her eyebrows up and down several times in anticipation of a big time. Darleen certainly knew her way around: she had even had a nice table reserved. The waiters bowed deferentially, and when one of them pulled Mrs. Feeley's chair out for her, she turned to him in the most friendly fashion and asked, "Don't I know you from somewhere?"

When he had gone away the ladies agreed he was sure a nice feller.

"We'll have beer," Darleen ordered, "and some clam juice for me!"

The Noah's Arkies enjoyed their beer out of the nice tall Pilsener glasses. Mrs. Rasmussen inquired in subtle pantomime whether or not she should take some of the glasses home by way of souvenir. Mrs. Feeley shook her head because Darleen was evidently well known here, and it might come back on her. Miss Tinkham loved the little red silk shades on the electric candles at each table.

MRS. FEELEY said she didn't know when she had been in such a nice genteel place. The juke box played softly and continuously.

They had an awful time deciding between broiled red snapper and fried abalone steaks. The red snapper won. Mrs. Feeley decided that she had better go and wash her hands if she expected to stow away the next course in comfort. Darleen pointed out the door to her and off she went.

Miss Tinkham was beginning to get the far corners filled up and had time for conversation once more.

"My dear, Johnny should be very proud of you! You are a gracious hostess and preside beautifully!"

Mrs. Rasmussen nodded, although she did not know what it all meant. Neither did Darleen, but it sounded impressive. Mrs. Feeley came back and said she was ready to start all over again.

Darleen said she had never had such a pleasant time in her whole life. The ladies said they had not either. When the bill and the waiter had been taken care of, they rose to go—Mrs. Feeley charging ahead as usual.

The others lingered to pick up match books and menus as souvenirs of the happy time. They heard suppressed laughter and titters at the tables all about them. Every head in the restaurant was turned to watch Mrs. Feeley's majestic progress. In her haste to return to the table, she had neglected something: the entire back of her skirt and slip were tucked into the elastic waistband of her bloomers. The diners were getting the full benefit of Mrs. Feeley's bare legs, like tenpins, and a truly impressive breadth of beam clad in tightly stretched pink rayon. Sublimely unaware of the disarray, Mrs. Feeley continued her stately progress right out the front door. Her friends caught up with her and pulled her dress down while Darleen hailed a cab.

Mrs. Feeley chuckled in the taxi. "Mr. Feeley always said a woman oughta dress as clean an' neat underneath as if she expected to get knocked down by a truck an' took off to the hospital every time she left the house. Darleen! The rest o' the night's on us! Where do we go from here?"

Darleen suggested a bar where fun and frolic were rife.

"Kinda postman's holiday for you, ain't it?" Mrs. Rasmussen said as they entered the Seven Seas. Apparently the seas had been a bit rough lately. The once lovely tapas were faded and moth-eaten, and the murals had been touched up by artistic patrons in their cups. The genuine Hawaiian orchestra consisted of very un-Polynesian musicians: two Mexicans and a Filipino.

Darleen certainly knew a lot of fellows. They all came over and paid their respects; she introduced them with pride to her new friends. True, she seldom knew the last names of the young men, but she knew a lot of them. Mrs. Feeley decided there was safety in numbers. A foreman from one of the shipyards asked Miss Tinkham to dance. They went out on the floor and began to toddle blissfully, cheek to cheek, their rear ends stuck out at an angle of forty-five degrees.

"You sure can't beat Miss Tinkham," Darleen said admiringly.

"Beat her? You can't even tie her! She's got more joy in her than ten ordinary people!" Mrs. Feeley responded.

The lady under discussion had made a conquest. Her foreman friend asked if he might join them and bought more beer all around; he wanted to know where Miss Tinkham lived and why he had not met her before. It was not every day one met such good company. His name was Oscar.

The lethargic orchestra began to play a dispirited hula. Absently Mrs. Feeley made hula movements with her fat little hands. She was mulling something over.

"Where do you s'pose their ma is?" she asked Darleen.

"Who?"

"Them brats next door to you!" Mrs. Feeley said.

Darleen answered, "She hasn't never been right since the Japs executed her husband that time. She just went off the beam all at once! Started drinking and bringing guys home like crazy."

The ladies were openmouthed.

"She feels like it's her fault, on account of she nagged him so much he put in for the most dangerous job he could get. She was mad at him when he left and wouldn't even go up to Frisco to see him off! Now she hates herself, and that's why she acts the way she does."

Mrs. Feeley gasped. "Let her destroy herself if she's a mind to! But them kids!"

Miss Tinkham was sobbing softly.

"A demented mother! What chance have they in life? Juvenile delinquents, criminals, and degenerates!" she wailed.

"That ol' sour milk!" Mrs. Rasmussen sniffled. "An' her pants draggin' clear down round her ankles!"

Mrs. Feeley finished her drink and set her mug down like a period at the end of a sentence. "We'd never be able to look each other in the face again did we let 'em stay in that boar's nest one more night. C'm'on, Darleen! We gotta take a cab to carry the pressure cooker anyway!"

THE next morning the residents of Noah's Ark jumped hurriedly out of bed, to track down the source of a noise much like that Noah must have heard when he was moved to build the original ark.

Pierpont and Myrna had discovered the bathroom. They had both tub faucets turned on full blast and were jumping up and down in the tub naked, screaming like Comanches.

Mrs. Feeley peeked in. The tub was half full of pots and pans. Mrs. Rasmussen would take a fit when she discovered that Pierpont was using her good colander for a shower bath. Myrna was floating a baking pan, splashing it along with her hands.

"Beep! Beep! I'm a tug!" she grinned.

"Airplane carrier! Airplane carrier!" her brother corrected, banging her cordially on the head with a pie pan.

"Tug!" Myrna reiterated firmly, kicking her brother where she thought it would do the most good.

Mrs. Feeley moaned. "We sure went an' done it this time!" She rolled back to the kitchen.

Mrs. Rasmussen and Miss Tinkham were there. Mrs. Rasmussen went over to the pallet on the floor where the children had been dumped with scant ceremony the night before. She passed an experienced hand over the quilts.

"Who'd 'a' thought it? They're house-broke!" she murmured in amazement.

Pierpont and Myrna had evidently finished their naval maneuvers. They were now screaming God Bless America at the top of their lungs and beating time against the side of the tub with Mrs. Rasmussen's treasured red coffeepot.

"There ain't nothin' for it, I guess," the owner of the red coffeepot said, girding up her loins. "They gotta be fed and then they gotta be took off somewheres. Winston an' Franklin wouldn't sleep a wink with that rumpus goin' on!"

"What was we thinkin' of!" Mrs. Feeley fumed.

Mrs. Rasmussen got a grip on herself and scrambled two eggs. Then she made toast. After setting the food in the warming oven, she took a large towel from a drawer and charged into the bathroom.

"Get outa that tub!" Mrs. Rasmussen's mouth was very firm.

Pierpont held his nose and stuck his head under the water. Then he wiggled his feet at Mrs. Rasmussen. Mrs. Rasmussen's muscular arm reached out with smoothness and precision and grabbed Pierpont by the scruff of his scrawny neck. He fought and wriggled, but she held him fast in the thick towel. Without haste she sat down and calmly and methodically blistered Pierpont's bony posterior. Myrna climbed out of the tub in a slippery flash and was on Mrs. Rasmussen, biting and scratching like an angry cat.

"Ol' squack! Ol' squack!" she screamed.

Mrs. Rasmussen held Pierpont under one arm and picked Myrna up with the other. Mrs. Feeley and Miss Tinkham were standing in the door watching the fracas. Mrs. Rasmussen administered a few sharp slaps where Myrna needed them most.

"Would you be so kindly as to hand me their dirty clothes, Mrs. Feeley? We ain't got nothin' else to put on right now!" Mrs. Feeley brought in the scant garments and took up her post at the door.

"Now you put 'em on," she said, handing each child the right clothes. "On the double!"

Astonished, Pierpont and Myrna never took their eyes off Mrs. Rasmussen. But they put their clothes on.

"Stick out your finger," their mentor ordered. They did so and Mrs. Rasmussen squeezed a blob of tooth paste on each clean water-soaked finger.

"Now rub an' let's see can't we get some o' that green moss offa them little teeth!" The children rubbed.

"Now the comb!" Mrs. Rasmussen cried.

Pierpont's hair was no job at all, although his cowlick would not stay put. Myrna scrouged down in the corner when the comb started in the direction of her kinky red mop. But Mrs. Rasmussen was expert: she held the wiggling mite in a firm grip between her knees.

"Now we'll eat!" she announced.

The boy and the girl followed her to the table, eying her cautiously all the while. At her command, they sat down and she tied napkins under their chins. They protested. Mrs. Rasmussen ignored the protest and set plates of scrambled eggs and toast in front of them.

In the middle of a big mouthful, Myrna announced, "Don' like scrammel-deggs! Wanna hot dog!"

With utmost unconcern Mrs. Rasmussen glanced at the almost-empty plate, then said softly, "If you know what's good for you, you'll eat your breakfast an' keep your mouth shut before I spank the waddin' outa you!"

The other ladies were overcome: they hadn't known Mrs. Rasmussen was a child psychologist!

"I wonder what's keepin' Lily." Mrs. Feeley yawned. "Not that I'm in a hurry to see any new faces in this zoo, but they ain't never been late before."

The fog was beginning to lift in Miss Tinkham's cranium.

"It has just occurred to me that unless the celestial bodies are wrong, this is Sunday and the twins won't be here!"

Mrs. Feeley sank gently into a heap from sheer relief.

"But what we aimin' to do with these house apes?" Mrs. Rasmussen asked.

Pierpont and Myrna had discovered the sewing machine and were riding up and down like mad things on the treadle.

"Hey, boy! Knock that off this minute!" Mrs. Feeley shouted.

"Wanna ride! Wanna ride!" Myrna shrieked.

INTO this bedlam walked Darleen and a haggard red-haired young woman with an acute nervous tic. "May I present Daphne Garfunkle?" Darleen said to the gathering at large.

Pierpont and Myrna backed into Miss Tinkham's room at the sight of their mother.

"Now this is the story—" Mrs. Garfunkle began.

"We know the story!" Mrs. Feeley interrupted. "What we wanna know is what you aimin' to do about it?"

Mrs. Garfunkle's eye winked twice as fast as usual. The question set her back on her heels. She decided to try a little bluster.

"Now look here," she said nastily, "I didn't ask you to come in and kidnap my children!"

"Kidnap!" Mrs. Feeley shouted. "Did you know that they's laws in this state? Did you know you could be announced a unfit mother for them kids? You could be sent to the reformatory for neglectin' 'em that way! Their poor dead dad! Couldn't even sleep in his grave did he know they wasn't gettin' even the upbringin' of a alley cat!"

Mrs. Garfunkle was silent under the blast.

Darleen went into Miss Tinkham's room. In a few minutes she came out, dragging a child in each hand. They had discovered Miss Tinkham's cosmetics. They had covered their faces with scarlet dots of lipstick and had painted handle-bar mustaches on their upper lips with eyebrow pencil. Miss Tinkham emitted a faint squeak; Mrs. Rasmussen rolled her eyes to the skies.

Suddenly Mrs. Garfunkle was seized with a shaking and quivering. She jerked and shook and groaned.

"Somebody do somethin'!" Mrs. Feeley cried. "She'll be speakin' in tongues in another minute! She ain't but one jump ahead of a runnin' fit now!"

The children stared at their mother, entranced.

Mrs. Rasmussen appeared with a towel wrung out of ice water and put it on Mrs. Garfunkle's head. Miss Tinkham and Mrs. Feeley laid her on the bed.

"Get them imps o' Satan outa here before I bust one of 'em!" Mrs. Feeley snapped, rubbing their mother's hands briskly. "Reckon she'll sleep it off?" she asked Darleen, who had chased Pierpont and Myrna out to play in the junk yard.

"Gee, I don't know," Darleen said. "I've never saw her like that! Don't you think we need a doctor?"

"Nah," Mrs. Rasmussen said. "They're all gone off to the war an' couldn't do nothin' for her nohow. She's fixin' to have a nervous breakdown!"

"Reckon she's been takin' somethin'?" Mrs. Feeley inquired.

"I don't think so," Darleen answered. "Just drinkin' and carryin' on. She never stops a minute, or sleeps, or anything. She acts awful funny—she was so grateful when she found you'd took the kids, but the minute she got here she started in to fight and talk back to you. She got fired by the sigh-chiatrist for being what he called a maniac-depressing type."

"An' I thought it was just the screamin' meemies!" Mrs. Feeley said contritely.

The Noah's Arkies and Darleen stood like four bedposts watching Mrs. Garfunkle for signs of life.

"I heard that spirits of pneumonia was good for shock," Mrs. Rasmussen said. "Reckon that I got for washin' windows would do?"

Daphne Garfunkle must have heard the discussion of the various restoratives the ladies went on to consider.

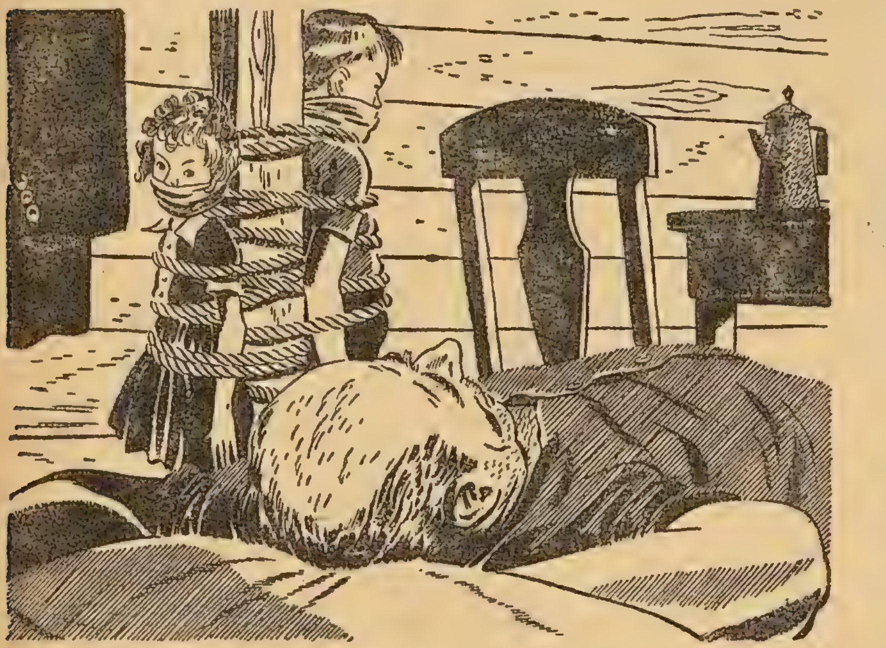
Perhaps she only heard with her subconscious mind, but she stirred and tried to sit up—just in time.

"Take it easy!" Mrs. Feeley cautioned. "You had a mean turn there!"

Without warning, Daphne broke into heavy shuddering sobs. She sat in the middle of the bed crying hysterically with closed eyes and a dreadfully contorted face. Miss Tinkham started to put a hand on her shoulder, but Mrs. Feeley restrained her with a shake of her head.

The ladies left the bedside and sat down quietly in the kitchen end of the room.

Mrs. Feeley said softly, "This here's been bottled up inside of her for a long time—it's gotta wear itself out! Let her cry. Only thing that'll do her any good!"



The women tried, a little self-consciously, to carry on a normal conversation.

"Poor thing! Trying to escape from herself!" Miss Tinkham said. "A complete personality disharmony!"

"Yeah?" Mrs. Rasmussen thought that was a lovely name for it.

"Oh, definitely!" Miss Tinkham went on. "She loathes herself for what she thinks she did to her husband, and subconsciously is striving to destroy the self that is so poorly integrated. A distinct manifestation of the will to die!"

"You don't say!" Mrs. Feeley looked at the other women and cocked her head in Miss Tinkham's direction, reminding them that this fabulous creature was their friend. Actually lived under the same roof and breathed the same air they did!

"Darleen! You take notice o' how Miss Tinkham talks! You might never have another chance to hear nothin' like that again in your whole life! Sometime you'd oughta hear her recite verses!" Mrs. Feeley said proudly.

Mrs. Rasmussen chopped some ice and brought the cold drink over to the bed.

"You feel any better?" she asked kindly.

The battered face looked up at the four anxious ones, and the bloodshot eyes filled with tears.

"Don't," she whimpered, her face puckering piteously. "Don't heap coals of fire on my head! After the way I came in here and insulted you!" She buried her face in Mrs. Feeley's round warm tummy.

"There, there! Forget it!" Mrs. Feeley soothed. "What say we scratch all that out an' start over, huh?" She stroked the tousled flaming hair. "You gotta rest, girl!" she advised. "You're run down somethin' awful! Your nerves is shot!"

"You're a right young woman," Mrs. Rasmussen said. "Wouldn't be bad-lookin', was you cleaned up some! You got lots to live for! What's to become o' them kids if you don't get a grip on yourself an' give 'em some raisin'?"

Daphne shook her head.

"Don't even talk about it," she begged. "I keep seeing him in them, and they're a living reproach!"

Mrs. Feeley snapped, "What's done is done! The shame of it is that you let yourself go this far. Can't nobody help you but yourself!"

"Let the dead past bury its dead, my dear!" Miss Tinkham advised. "Each day is a little life! Each morning a fresh beginning!"

Daphne looked around the circle of faces, and then said to Darleen, "How can I ever repay you for bringing me here? They have been so good to me, and they never even laid eyes on me before! I don't even know their names!"

"That doesn't make any difference," Darleen explained. "That's just the way they are."

"You know what I'd do if I was you?" Mrs. Feeley asked. "If I had the money, an' was all tore down in a dismangled heap like you, I'd hie me, tomorrow morning, to that Heavenly Valley Sanitarium for about three months!"

"I have his insurance in the bank," Daphne said. "I never could bring myself to touch a penny of it."

"Well, this is the time to touch it! You gotta spend some of it to put yourself into some kinda shape! You wanna make up for the bad wife you think you been to him, don't you?" Mrs. Feeley asked.

The girl nodded.

"All right! That's why he taken that insurance—to help you get on your feet! You gotta prepare yourself to be a good mother!"

Daphne agreed.

"But what could I do with the children?"

That was a poser. What would anybody do with those children, Mrs. Feeley was thinking.

Mrs. Rasmussen offered a solution.

"You could board 'em out with one o' the societies, in them Homes for Neglected Children!"

The mother's eyes brimmed over again at the classification she had let her children slip into. "All right," she agreed with an effort. "If you'll help me pick out a home where they'll be treated kindly."

Darleen cleared her throat and spoke in a small voice: "It isn't none of my business, I realize that; but I'd hate to see any kid get into the kind I was in."

"Well, we sure can't take 'em—'cause Franklin an' Winston was here first!" Mrs. Feeley cleared up that issue.

"Now was they quiet, an' played nice— By the way"—Mrs. Rasmussen interrupted herself—"they're awful quiet right now!"

Darleen shrugged. "Like I said," she continued, "it isn't none of my business, but would it do any good if I was to come in and take them off of your hands?"

"You couldn't!" Mrs. Feeley said. "You sleep all day an' work all night!"

"I am resigning!" Darleen launched her depth charge. "I have recently become very fed up with my position at the café. Ever since I have went round some with you ladies, I don't like that job no more."

Mrs. Feeley restrained the impulse to give vent to three rousing cheers. Mrs. Rasmussen smirked happily. Miss Tinkham put her arm around Darleen and said:

"To thine own self be true! You'll never regret it."

"I'll pay you, Darleen!" Mrs. Garfunkle offered.

"Well, we'll work things out somehow! We always do!"

Mrs. Rasmussen went to the back of the room to stir up a bite, and Darleen went out to the yard to see what had become of Pierpont and Myrna. She could not find them anywhere. Then she heard a faint tapping coming from the shed occupied by Old Timer, the junk-yard caretaker. She opened the door and peeked in. Pierpont and Myrna were trussed up with ropes to the stanchions. Their mouths were firmly gagged. Darleen released them, expecting a flood of yells and kicks.

Pierpont grinned and said, "We're playin' a new game! Jap prisoners! He showed us how!" And he pointed to Old Timer sleeping blissfully on his canvas cot.

DAPHNE sent Myrna's crib and a small iron day bed for Pierpont over to the Ark in a taxi as soon as she got home Sunday afternoon, and Monday morning Darleen arrived as per agreement, carrying clean clothes for the children.

"Well," Mrs. Rasmussen remarked, "you look bright-eyed and bushy-tailed this mornin'!"

Mrs. Feeley said, "Set down an' have a plate o' potato pancakes an' some coffee!"

"Do, dear!" Miss Tinkham urged. "We must fortify ourselves for the exigencies of the day!"

"Daphne has went to the sanitarium all right!" Darleen announced proudly. "She thrown the kids' clothes in this carton and moved it into my room. Then she put her things in one little suitcase and give up the room!"

"Well," Mrs. Feeley said, "won't hurt to spend a nickel around dinnertime—you can just call up on the stren'th o' wantin' to know how she is. No use leavin' things to chance."

"I believe she was sincere in her desire to change," Miss Tinkham said kindly. "Did she have enough money?"

"She told me on purpose I should tell you ladies; she even shown me her bankbook! She's sure enough got five thousand dollars—and had quite a big wad in her pocketbook! She gave me this for the kids' eats, and said she'd pay every Sunday when I bring the kids to see her." Darleen took a twenty-dollar bill out of her purse and, with unerring instinct, handed it to Mrs. Rasmussen.

When the children were dressed and slicked up, she gave them their breakfast. The twins arrived about that time and the ladies met them at the door with cries of joy. Pierpont and Myrna got up to watch the excitement as the pram holding the sleeping beauties was wheeled in.

"C'm'on, let's eat!" Pierpont said scornfully to his sister. "Ain't nothin' but two little old baldy twins!"

"Now, boy, don't let me hear a sound outa you!" Mrs. Feeley admonished. "Them twins ain't to be woke up, y'unnerstand?"

"It's time we went out to play, anyway," Darleen said.

AT NOON she carried a tray of lunch out to the children in the trailer she'd discovered in the parking lot. While they ate, she looked around at the trailer. Its builder had been a good planner. The bunks were neat and had comfortable springs and mattresses. There were small built-in cupboards, a tiny stove, sink, and wash-hand basin, and against one wall a collapsible table. The trailer was a regular little home on wheels.

"Now you kids take your clothes off and take a nap," she ordered. Without a word they obeyed.

She took the tray back to the Ark and had her own lunch. There was little conversation at the table. They were all just a little in awe of Darleen's display of motherhood.

She gave the children their supper in the trailer and told them they could play until she got back. She went to get their bedding from the Ark, to use on the trailer bunks. They could just as well sleep there, she said.

The next morning Darleen came late. She was downcast and extremely quiet, even for her.

"Her eyes looks like two holes burned in a saddle blanket," Mrs. Rasmussen whispered when Darleen took the children out to the yard. Later, when they were bedded down for their nap, Darleen went to the Ark for her lunch.

"Mrs. Feeley, if it's all the same to you ladies, I been thinking—" she began.

"Y'ain't gonna quit an' give up now, are you?" Mrs. Feeley interrupted.

Darleen shook her head.

"I was gonna ask you if it was all right for me to move into the trailer—I could pay you rent for it instead of my room."

"Ain't we the jug-heads? Why couldn't we 'a' thought o' that?" Mrs. Feeley yelled. "An' you'll not pay no rent neither!"

Darleen smiled wanly.

"Seems like it would help to keep me from feeling lonesome nights. And then you ladies wouldn't be tied down so bad, in case you wanted to go out of an evening!"

"Discretion is the better part of valor!" Miss Tinkham said.

"I didn't take no steps till I talked it over with you ladies. If you'll mind Pierpont and Myrna, I'll run over and pack. I'm giving up my telephone, too!" Darleen said solemnly. The air was full of the smoke of burning bridges.

"How'll Johnny find you when he does get in?" Mrs. Feeley asked.

"I left word at the café, and I'll leave word with Mabel—she's good about addresses and stuff."

She was no sooner out the door than the ladies joined hands and did a solemn mazurka.

MRS. FEELEY and Mrs. Rasmussen had just entered the Ark after a Saturday-morning inspection tour of Darleen's new home in the trailer, when a taxi door slammed in front of the house. The ladies rushed out to see who it was. A huge sailor in a too-tight suit of whites was coming up the walk in great strides. He wore the rating marks of a second-class boatswain's mate.

"What you want, Boats?" Mrs. Feeley demanded, remembering that he who hits first hits twice.

"I wanna see my kids!" Boats roared, grinning hugely.

Mrs. Feeley's jaw dropped. "Where's your wife?" she demanded.

"She's quittin' her job!" The sailor grabbed the handle of the screen door and began trying to shake it down. "Lemme see my little boys, grandma!"

"It's the father o' the twins!" Mrs. Feeley cried, unlatching the door.

Mrs. Rasmussen ran to wheel out the baby buggy and the boatswain's mate stood regarding his sleeping progeny with awe. He took off his white hat and stood twisting it nervously in his great paws.

In honor of a momentous occasion, Mrs. Rasmussen graciously consented to awaken Franklin and Winston, and they soon sat enthroned each on a monumental knee.

"Tell us how you managed to get back," Miss Tinkham urged, "and I do hope you are going to have a nice long furlough!"

The sailor smiled widely and happily. "I got shore dooty! Up to Vallejo! Lily's quittin' right now, an' we're gonna be a reg'lar fambly—us an' the babies!"

The ladies sank into the first chairs that came handy.

Mrs. Feeley was the first to recover. "You ain't aimin' to take the twins away from us?" she asked, in a small voice.

"Chee! We got to! Don't y'unnerstan'? Lily an' me's gonna live in a house in Vallejo—like reg'lar people!"

"When you gonna take 'em away?"

"Lily, she's comin' in the car soon's she gets her pay that's comin' to her! Then we gotta pack an' scram to Vallejo!"

When Lily arrived, she saw the tremendous effort the ladies were making not to dissolve into tears, so she wheeled her youngsters out while their father gathered up their traps.

At the door Boats turned and mumbled, "An' don't think we're gonna forget youse neither!"

The three friends stood in the doorway watching the little family go.

AFTER lunch, Darleen scrubbed and brushed the Garfunkles almost out of recognition and took them to the movies.

"Now it's quiet and nice, we can figger out what we're gonna do to replace the twins," Mrs. Feeley said. "I'd kinda like to get into somethin' with a little fight in it, myself!"

"Try an' get it!" Mrs. Rasmussen remarked dourly. "You ain't forgot what they done to us at the airyplane factory?"

"Well, they ain't the only biscuit in the slop!" Mrs. Feeley argued.

The ladies looked at one another for a few moments before it dawned on them that there was nothing to hold them back. It was not yet three o'clock and there was something cozy about the bars on a Saturday afternoon. Maybe they would not miss the twins so sorely if they went out and lapped up a few. Darleen could get her own supper along with the children's.

"Where'll it be, ladies?" Mrs. Feeley asked as they set out.

"Let's go where we knows a gang," Mrs. Rasmussen suggested. "Today's payday—an' you don't wanna forget that we just kissed sixty dollars a month good-by 'long with them twins! No use spendin' our own money!"

By common consent the ladies turned in at the door of the Seven Seas. Mrs. Feeley cast a weather eye over the place: nothing but boots and a marine or two.

"Don't look good," she said. "We'll listen to the music an' be nurses."

"Nurses?" Miss Tinkham pricked up her ears. Nurses wore uniforms.

"Yeup! We'll kinda nurse our beer along till a pay monkey shows up!"

Miss Tinkham was fumbling for her lorgnette.

"Don't look now, but that shipbuilder friend of Darleen's has just come in—what was his name? Oscar! Remember? A lovely spender and quite a gay foot as a dancer!"

"It sure is him!" Mrs. Feeley agreed. Mrs. Rasmussen said he had a nice-looking fellow with him, too. Too bad they had chosen to sit way over there at the bar.

With a languorous grace Miss Tinkham rose from the table and sauntered toward the ladies' room. In passing, she practically knocked Oscar off his stool.

"Why, howdy, girlie!" he cried, righting himself.

Miss Tinkham looked at him with almost convincing bewilderment.

"Have I the pleasure?" she murmured.

"Sure! I'm Oscar! We was dancing together one night! Remember?" he persisted.

"Oscar!" Miss Tinkham cried. "How utterly stupid of me! How could I ever forget you?"

"How's your pals?" Oscar inquired politely.

"Why don't you inquire in person?" Miss Tinkham suggested coyly, waving at their table.

"Suppose they'd mind if me and my buddy was to join 'em?" he asked.

Miss Tinkham hesitated just long enough.

"I am sure they would be delighted to renew your acquaintance!" she said graciously.

"Hi, Mrs. Feeley!" Oscar cried jovially. "Lessee, lady! What was your name, now?"

"Same now as 'twas then—Rasmussen!" the lady in question replied dryly.

"Ladies, this here is my buddy! Name's Jasper!"

The waiter was hovering in the background.

"Beer for me and my friends!" Oscar ordered grandly.

"They want anything?" The waiter indicated the ladies with a scornful wave of his bar clout.

"Sure they do—an' on the double!" their host replied.

"The trash they uses for help these days!" Mrs. Feeley sneered.

"That's the truth!" Jasper put in. "What you gotta go through to get a bite to eat in this town! Stand in line, and by the time they get to you, 'Sorry, but we're all outa the hamburger steak!' I've ate hot dogs an' kraut till I'm ready to bark!"

"A man can't work on that!" Mrs. Rasmussen said.

"You're tellin' me? I ain't got hardly no hemoglobin!" Oscar informed her.

Mrs. Rasmussen was beginning to wonder if this was a real nice conversation when Oscar continued, "I went down to the Red Cross to give a pint of blood, an' come to find out I couldn't, because I didn't have hardly a pint for myself, let alone to give away!"

"Well, ladies," said Mrs. Rasmussen, "we're sabotaging the ships if we don't feed these two. Let's take 'em home to dinner."

AFTER dinner—which Oscar and Jasper ate as if they were afraid somebody would snatch their plates away—Oscar cleared his throat.

"Now, if you could see your way clear to feed me and Jasper, here, our dinner every night, we'd be glad to pay any price you might ask," he said.

Jasper nodded vigorously. "We'd soon be in shape to give blood every eight weeks if we was getting a meal like this every night."

Mrs. Feeley and Miss Tinkham went into a huddle with the chef.

Presently they went back to the men and Mrs. Rasmussen said, "They's on'y one thing. There ain't no profit in just two guys; might's well put the big pot on with the little one. So you'll have to get me four more guys! They gotta bring their ration books, an' every one of 'em has gotta be givin' blood to the Red Cross."

Jasper and Oscar got up and shook hands all around. They said they knew just the right fellows to bring.

When the guests had gone, the ladies sat and rocked. There was only a small light burning, a red-glass affair shaped like a rose that sat on the radio. There was no need for talk. Life was good, and, what was more to the point, at last it had some meaning. To be able to save other lives by the very fact of your own aliveness; that was really something!

Miss Tinkham rose in the dimness and went to the piano.

"My dears," she said, "I am going to sing The Holy City!"

ON SUNDAY morning Darleen took the children to visit their mother. After lunch the household snoozed, the ladies in their rooms and Old Timer on the day bed in the living room.

They had been asleep about half an hour, when the doorbell clattered and clanged like a thing possessed. Mrs. Feeley struggled up from the waves of sleep and went to the door. Nobody was there.

"Couldn't 'a' been very important or they'd 'a' waited," Mrs. Feeley said. "I'm goin' back to sleep."

Her friends followed her example and lay down again. They slept until the same thing happened over again.

"'Tain't Halloween, is it?" Mrs. Feeley asked.

"That's months away," Miss Tinkham said.

"Must be them neighborhood brats," Mrs. Rasmussen fumed. "They ain't no sign of nobody there!"

The ladies were wide awake by now and thoroughly enraged.

"I got a idea!" Mrs. Feeley announced. "That's sure some wise guy—an' this time we're gonna be ready for him!"

Her friends agreed and set about preparing for the attack. Mrs. Rasmussen emerged from the bathroom carrying the type of plunger commonly known as a plumber's friend. She parked it by the door and went to the back of the room and unearthed the poker that belonged to the old wood stove. She handed Miss Tinkham the plumber's friend; she thought she could get more results with the poker herself.

Meantime, Mrs. Feeley had dragged the stepladder right up to the front door. Then she got a big bucketful of water and climbed up on top of the ladder and sat down. Mrs. Rasmussen handed her up the water.

"Now you know what to do!" she coached.

Mrs. Rasmussen opened the door a tiny, unnoticeable crack, and they took their places.

Suddenly the lookout tensed. "He's comin'! Get ready!" she whispered.

She threw open the door and started belaboring the tall blond young man clad in an expensive camel's-hair topcoat. Mrs. Feeley heaved the bucket of water right in his face, and Miss Tinkham hit him repeatedly on the shins with the plumber's friend. The young man brushed Mrs. Rasmussen off the steps with one sweep of an arm and shoved Miss Tinkham aside with the other.

He addressed Mrs. Feeley. "What's the score, sister?" He finished mopping his face and his nice fair hair. He looked pretty mad about the state of his new coat.

"Let that be a lesson to you not to come botherin' people, ringin' doorbells three an' four times when folks is takin' their Sunday nap!" Mrs. Feeley shouted at him.

"Say, I just this minute come up the walk—you had the door open and started shellackin' me before I even had a chance to look for a bell! What's the big idea?"

"Well, some kid's been ringin' our bell all afternoon so we couldn't sleep, an' we was layin' for him—an' it looks like you got it! What you want, if you wasn't prankin'?" she demanded.

"They told me this was where Darleen lives."

"What you want of her?" Mrs. Feeley asked suspiciously.

"I don't see as it's any of your business," the young man replied.

"We're makin' it our business," Mrs. Rasmussen said, picking herself up from the ground.

"We are very particular about the background of Darleen's associates—we demand to know who you are!" Miss Tinkham announced haughtily.

The young man grinned in spite of himself.

"I'm Johnny," he said simply.

"Now we gone an' done it!" Mrs. Feeley cried. "C'm'on in, boy!"

She dragged him by the coat sleeve. Mrs. Rasmussen and Miss Tinkham ran to fetch towels, and a coat hanger to hang up his nice coat to dry.

Before Darleen returned from the sanitarium with the children Johnny had heard the story of how the ladies became acquainted with her, and after he had been comforted with beer, he remarked that Darleen was in good hands.

With her usual indirection, Mrs. Feeley hinted, "What you aimin' to do about Darleen?"

Not in the least taken aback, Johnny replied that he was going to marry her if he had to give her knockout drops to do it. It appeared that during Johnny's sojourn in a hospital in India, after his ship had been sunk, he had spent a good deal of time in thought.

"I lain there studyin', an' I says, 'Godwin,' I says, 'time you knocked off this mallarkey an' settled down! All dames is a gamble to some extent! An' I believe Darleen will play the game straight with you, if she knows you're playin' straight with her!' When a man's floatin' aroun' in that oily water, he's gotta have somethin' besides just a board to cling to!"

"Oh, my dear," Miss Tinkham breathed, "how really romantic! It's just as we have maintained all along: each of us must have someone in whom to believe!"

"She's a fine girl—clean an' neat as a pin! Some days she takes as many as two baths!" Mrs. Rasmussen wanted Johnny to know what he was getting.

"She is a likable kid," Mrs. Feeley agreed. "Only one thing, boy! I gotta say it: a wild goose don't lay no tame eggs!"

"I know it," Johnny agreed, nodding his blond head solemnly. "But I says, 'Godwin,' I says, 'you can afford to forget a coupla little incidents in your own life! An' you can do as much for Darleen.' I'm hopin' to rub all that out an' start clean from scratch—if she'll have me! I figger once I got that weddin' ring on her, an' she has a nice marriage certificate to hang over her bed, an' gets her money orders an' mail all addressed to Mrs. Johnny Godwin, it'll sure make a lot of difference! Maybe I'm wrong, but I think it'll work!"

"Lookit all them Navy wives," Mrs. Rasmussen said. "You sure would be surprised at how many o' them is true!"

"Yeah," Johnny agreed. "An' it would be easier for us, in a way! Because the minute my ship hits port, I can hop on a train an' go home to see my wife without waitin' for no by-your-leave from nobody! If I wanna skip one cruise I can—then sign on for the next thing goin' out, if I'm a mind to. Godwin ain't takin' orders from nobody!"

The ladies were vastly impressed by the intestinal fortitude of the merchantman.

"I sure like your coat," Mrs. Rasmussen said.

"Yeah, but I was took!" Johnny said. "You know what got me? That hand stitchin' on them welts round the edge! Set me back a hundred bucks, that coat."

"Reckon you could support Darleen all right at that rate," Mrs. Feeley fished.

"You said that right," Johnny replied modestly. "I make three hundred and seventy-five dollars a month without the bonus. I reckon she can get by on that!"

THE ladies were speechless. Mrs. Rasmussen got him some more beer and a snack. She decided that the ladies had better be dressed and ready to clear out and leave Darleen a clear field with Johnny when she got back. One by one they slipped off and got dressed. They certainly did not want to appear crass about anything. Mrs. Rasmussen was the first one ready, and soon her companions joined her.

Johnny reached into the pocket of his vest and pulled out a small wad of tissue paper. As he unrolled it, the ladies went goggle-eyed at the sight of a beautiful blue-white diamond that weighed nearly two carats.

"Cheap as dirt over in South Africa," Johnny said. "But she sure better not ever try to hock it! 'Cause we'd all go to jail! It ain't a registered stone."

"Hope you don't mind us shovin' off," Mrs. Feeley apologized, around five o'clock, "but we gotta go somewheres that we can't get out of!"

"One of those long-standing previous engagements," Miss Tinkham seconded, catching right on.

Mrs. Rasmussen fixed two bowls of bread and milk for the children and left them ready on a tray. "Help yourself to the beer an' the radio. There's stuff in the icebox if you get hungry," she said to Johnny.

He promised to make himself at home; he enjoyed just being in a house again. The ladies hastened to get out before Darleen's return.

When they came back, Johnny and Darleen were sitting decorously in the big rockers. Darleen looked happy, although a little nervous and self-conscious. The residents of the Ark kissed them both and began to ask questions about the wedding. Johnny said he was going to have the diamond mounted first thing in the morning—then they were going to Yuma in a taxi to get married. The ladies were impressed by the idea of a taxi all the way to Yuma. Mrs. Feeley told them to be sure to come back to the Ark for a little wedding supper.

"An' don't you worry none about the kids," Mrs. Rasmussen told Darleen. "We'll take 'em off your hands."

"Where you aimin' to stay tonight?" Mrs. Feeley asked Johnny.

"At the hotel," he said.

Mrs. Feeley studied Darleen's face. The look on it was different already—a glint of pride in her eyes bespoke her new dignity.

PROMPTLY at six next evening the assorted young men trooped shyly into the Ark. The air was laden with the odor of roast beef and Yorkshire pudding. The boarders sniffed and smiled at one another. Nearly every one of them carried a little paper bag with a few bottles of beer in it.

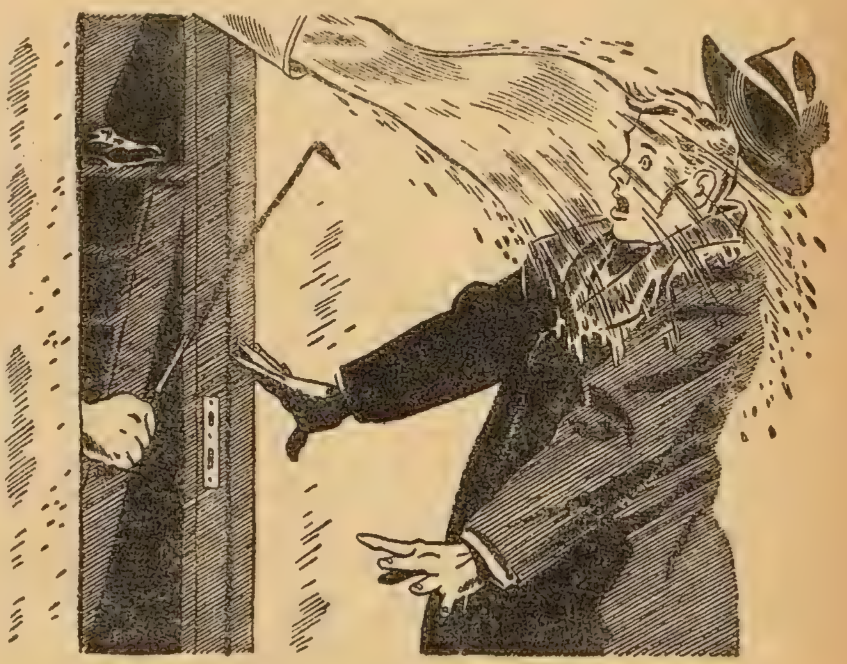
"Now just make yourselves at home while we dishes up!" Mrs. Feeley said grandly, after Oscar had introduced the men to the ladies.

"Chow down!" Mrs. Rasmussen shouted presently, and the six men took their places at the table.

"What about you ladies?" Oscar asked.

"We'll eat after! Right now we gotta fill you guys up!" the chef replied.

Mrs. Feeley hovered about pouring beer into their glasses. Mrs. Rasmussen suppressed a grin as she watched her divide one bottle between two men, while at the same time her foot rolled a full bottle under the table for future reference. The boarders would not take notice of a little minor filching—they were too busy snatching hot whole-wheat walnut rolls off the bread tray.



The dessert really caused them to blow a fuse.

"What is it?" they asked in hushed tones after the first bite into the dark glossy custard topped with pecans.

"Molasses pie! Full o' iron!" Mrs. Rasmussen replied, as she poured large cups of coffee, strong enough to raise up and flag a train.

When the last crumb had disappeared, a tall redhead rose and asked, "Mrs. Rasmussen, would you mind marryin' me, ma'am?"

The cook beamed and came right back at him. "You can take your place in the line with the rest of 'em!" she quipped. "Too bad you wasn't hungry!"

"Gee, we'll sure be lookin' forward to tomorrow!" Jasper said as they left.

Mrs. Rasmussen was counting the money. "You know what? If we ain't careful, we'll be making enough money to get caught by the income tax!"

Tuesday afternoon Johnny and his bride showed up. Johnny was to be in port only a week, and wanted to take Darleen on a honeymoon if someone would look after the children.

Miss Tinkham's tender heart could not bear the thought of the newlyweds being cheated out of their honeymoon, so she offered her services. Old Timer could be relied on to invent games that were certainly different, if not always instructive.

"This trip's a short one," Johnny told Mrs. Feeley. "With luck, I'll be back in four weeks. An' then I'm gonna buy Darleen that bungalow across the street. I want she should have her own home."

"And when Daphne has recuperated from the hospital," Darleen added, "she can get a job and I'll keep the house and kids. I'll be right across the street from you and can see you every day just the same!"

The ladies beamed.

"You'll be careful at sea, won't you, Johnny?" Mrs. Feeley reminded.

"Oh, you must!" Miss Tinkham urged.

"Don't never worry about that!" Johnny promised. "If anybody gets off that ship, it's gonna be me!"

Nothing would do the boarders but they must all go out for a night on the town in honor of the great occasion. They went home before dinner to change into better clothes and returned bearing an imposing electric clock for Darleen and Johnny.

"After all," Oscar said, "if it hadn't been for knowin' Darleen, we would never have met these ladies—an' all this fine grub!"

MRS. RASMUSSEN had rather blown her top. By means best known to herself, she had wangled sixteen pounds of porterhouse steak from her butcher. She used a whole basket of fresh mushrooms on top of the steak. Platters of French-fried onions accompanied it—each onion ring the size of a doughnut.

The guests gorged and sighed. Then all hands turned to and did the dishes in record time. The ladies went to get dressed for the binge. As they were about to leave the Ark, Darleen shyly brought out a cardboard box. It held a cerise velvet evening jacket for Mrs. Rasmussen, a Spanish shawl for Mrs. Feeley, and a skunk chubby for Miss Tinkham.

Mrs. Feeley wrapped her shawl wickedly around her and grabbed a handful of fringe between her toothless gums, jumped high into the air, and clicked both heels together, to the noisy delight of the spectators.

"What-a-gal Feeley!" Oscar shouted.

Mrs. Rasmussen pulled her wrap tightly around her hips and sauntered across the floor.

"Yippee! The Queen of the Molasses Pies!" the redhead yelled.

Miss Tinkham, always a mistress of timing, slithered out between the curtains of her room clad in her lovely clinging white silk jersey dress, vintage 1926. It was a perfect foil for the skunk jacket. Purple velvet gloves came way above her elbows. Her hair was done in a modish upsweep, and she wore a half-hat consisting of a bunch of red velvet roses and a bit of veiling.

"Geez!" Jasper whispered. "Don't she look like the Duchess o'—you know?"

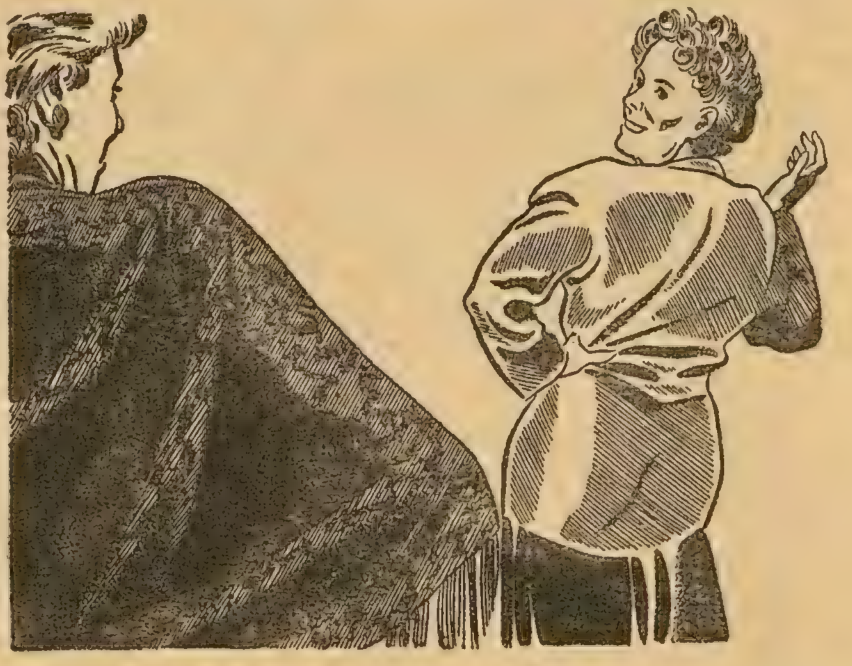
"Sure does! Only not so tough!"

"Somebody get a couple or three taxis," Oscar said. "In honor of the bride and groom, we're all going out an' get higher than a Georgia pine!"

THE Red Cross did a double take when the three ladies, six boarders, and Old Timer all strolled in at one time to donate blood. They said the ladies at Noah's Ark were national benefactors.

"An' you can count on 'em steady, too!" Mrs. Feeley said grimly. "First one that balks, out he goes an' we gets another guy to take his place!"

Several executives at the blood bank expressed the sentiment that it was too bad Mrs. Feeley was not in an executive position in Washington. With her direct methods, they thought the war might be shortened measurably.



Johnny bought the bungalow for Darleen. She scoured the shops and, with the help of Miss Tinkham and Mrs. Rasmussen, turned the place into a creditable little home.

"That girl's as handy as a pocket in a shirt!" Mrs. Rasmussen said with pride.

Daphne Garfunkle returned from the sanitarium twenty pounds heavier and minus her tic, and had no trouble getting a job: washing the parts of gyros. The ladies at the Ark were delighted.

"There is no satisfaction so great as that of having helped someone to a better life, is there?" Miss Tinkham mused as she scraped carrots.

"Damned if that ain't right!" Mrs. Feeley agreed. "Lookit them fellers we're feedin'! They was the peakiest, puniest bunch o' dough-bellies I'd ever saw when they come here. An' it's the devil's own time we have gettin' 'em to go home of a night after they've et!"

"It's the hospitable atmosphere of our cozy hearth and home," Miss Tinkham explained.

"I know that," Mrs. Feeley replied. "But does a body have a mind to take off her dress an' sit around in her slip of an evenin', it can't rightly be done with them fellers sittin' there gawkin'!"

"An' if we goes in our rooms, they think we're sulkin', ain't it?" Mrs. Rasmussen asked.

"What we really need," Miss Tinkham said dreamily, "is a recreation room!"

No one said a word for several minutes. Ideas began to scurry across Mrs. Feeley's face. Then she grinned.

"Wreck-reation room is right! Some little shanty o' their own where they can raise hell an' horse around without bein' in nobody's way!"

"Lumber's froze," Mrs. Rasmussen said.

"We'll think o' somethin'! We always do! They ain't a beer left, by any chance?"

"Yeah. But it ain't by chance!" Mrs. Rasmussen had a few bottles hidden under the sink. These trying days one could never tell when inspiration might lag—and there was nothing like a bottle of beer to start the old thinker ticking.

"Now if we had the stuff to build one," Mrs. Feeley said, "would we have to bother with a building permit? They act awful feisty about stuff like that at times!"

"Not if you puts it thirty inches from the property line an' it has a flat, not a pitched, roof."

In all the time Mrs. Feeley had known Mrs. Rasmussen, she had never figured out where she gleaned these gems of practical information. She apparently picked them up hither and yon, and stored them in her cheek the way a squirrel hoards nuts. The ladies wagged their heads in admiration.

"Well, I reckon that's that!" Mrs. Feeley said.

"It would be on the order of a social club, would it not?" Miss Tinkham asked.

"Somethin' like that. A place where they could read their papers, smoke, an' drink their beer, an' relapse generally," Mrs. Feeley explained.

"What shall we call it?" Miss Tinkham clapped a hand to her forehead. "Eureka! I have it! The fitting name in these eventful days! May I propose the Four Freedoms Bar and Social Club?"

"Just to look at you," Mrs. Feeley said in awed tones, "a body would never guess you was subject to them brain storms! Do they come to you in the middle o' the night?"

Miss Tinkham smiled in appreciation.

"We can't have no bar in there, or we'll be in Dutch with them revenuers! But I guess long as it's a club the charty members has a right to bring their own stuff an' drink it there," Mrs. Feeley said.

"Dues they gotta pay," said Mrs. Rasmussen.

THE boarders were informed of what was afoot and met the proposal with cheers. They said they would do all the manual labor and leave the ladies only the decorating to do.

They wanted to begin at once, but Mrs. Feeley nipped that in the bud, as she had not had a chance to check the oddments that were left around the junk yard. She refused to consider any plan that required new and essential materials.

"I got a swell record player an' radio that's never been hooked up yet. I hereby donate it to the cause!" one of the boarders said.

"No slot machines," Mrs. Feeley warned.

"An' what I'd like most of all," Oscar said, "would be some little desks, just any kind at all, where we could sit down an' write letters home."

Jasper said he had been a plumber's apprentice at home and was capable of installing the rest rooms.

"What's a club without a rest room?" he asked.

"What's any place without a rest room?" Mrs. Feeley challenged.

The redhead said he would do the electric wiring. Each of the boarders was full of clever ideas.

Next morning Mrs. Feeley went out to the junk yard all by herself. There was not much left in the way of building materials. For a while she thought she was stymied. But all at once she had it. "Be a little unusual," she said aloud, "but then nothin' we ever does is exactly run o' the mill!"

She hurried over to the pile of doors, large paneled wooden doors that Mr. Feeley bought when they tore down some of the buildings at the Exposition. With narrowed eyes she counted them. Then she made her way quickly to the Ark. The others were getting lunch ready. By Mrs. Feeley's face they knew she had reached a solution.

"'Tain't for nothin' Mr. Feeley always said that I was born with a horseshoe in the seat o' my pants! Them doors!"

"What good's the doors with no house to hang 'em on?" Mrs. Rasmussen asked.

Mrs. Feeley looked mysterious. "I was watchin' two bees out there, an' they gimme a idea!" she said. "I sees them bees workin' away, an' my eye lights on them doors an' I says what's to keep us from buildin' a eight-sided room out of 'em? Join three parts together. Just like a honeycomb—we got enough doors to do it—I counted 'em!" Mrs. Feeley announced proudly.

"What an inspiration!" Miss Tinkham said. "The octagon is one of the most economical of geometrical figures; the bees use it because it is a great space-saver."

"There won't be nothin' like it this side o' Kingdom Come," Mrs. Rasmussen said admiringly.

When the boarders were shown the plan for the Four Freedoms they said Mrs. Feeley should be designing airplane carriers with a brain like that. Saturday afternoon they arranged to get off early and begin work. All day Sunday the hammers banged and the saws whined. Somebody said it looked rather scrappy, all those doors different colors and what-not.

Mrs. Feeley snorted: "Never show children an' fools anythin' half finished!"

She knew how the Four Freedoms would look in her mind's eye from the very first—beautiful azure-blue walls, and the roof and awnings the same except for a wide lemon-yellow stripe, like a circus tent.

Since Mrs. Feeley had donated the lumber and the tin Oscar said it was only fair that the club should pay for the nails, the paint and the concrete for the floor. The men bought some small round tables at a second-hand store and some auto-top covering for the upholstery of the built-in benches.

The redhead worked for two evenings in the shed and the third night wheeled out an attractive and practical bar. The wheels were on the front end and the back end rested on two feet. The bar was pushed along by handles at the back end like a refreshment cart. He painted it blue and yellow to match the awning stripes. Someone else bought an old ice-chest for fifty cents and painted it blue and yellow also. They could not be bothered emptying the ice drips all the time, so they attached a piece of garden hose to the drain, bored a hole in the wall down near the floor, and ran the hose out into the garden to drain—the chest would hold lots of beer. Jaspar installed a pipe for running water just behind the bar.

"Need it to wash the glasses," he said.

"Gawd!" Mrs. Feeley exclaimed. "Who's gonna bother about that? That's the nice part about our club—we don't have to worry about sterilizing no glasses, on account o' we're all pure, or we couldn't be givin' blood to the bank! Sure simple-izes dishwashin'!"

The radio was installed ready to be hooked up when the boys tapped the electricity. Oscar said he'd help the redhead do the job, but it was best to wait till after dark. The public utilities people were pirates, and if they caught anybody snitching a little juice on the side, they would really make things hot!

The club was set for the grand opening Saturday evening. Friday night Red planned to hook up the electric current—not to Mrs. Feeley's meter. No sense to that; the light company would never miss it. Friday afternoon Miss Tinkham and Mrs. Feeley were putting on the finishing touches. They painted red curtains on the frames around the windows—very swish and drapy, and they would not need washing or take up as much room as real ones.

The desks and round tables were painted red, too. The finished room was cheery.

MRS. RASMUSSEN was baking cheese-straws and making cayenne potato chips for the opening night. Each club member had pledged himself to obtain a case of beer by fair means or foul. Daphne and Darleen were coming over. Old Timer was giving the red cement floor a final waxing by the simple expedient of sliding back and forth across it on a brick wrapped in burlap. Red arrived with a donation: two dozen nice beer glasses: all alike too! Miss Tinkham got busy and wrote the names of the club members on the glasses with red nail-polish.

Oscar was elected president of the Four Freedoms Bar and Social Club by acclamation. One of the Four-F Commandos was elected treasurer. They decided that two officers would be plenty. If they needed a bouncer, Old Timer could be it—he had a neat trick of butting people in the stomach with his head. "He picked it up when he was cook on the Star of India and it sure come handy," as Mrs. Feeley said.

The meeting opened with a rising vote of thanks to the ladies of Noah's Ark—for their good-fellowship, their help, and their tireless efforts on behalf of the poor, lone males. Mrs. Rasmussen was then tendered a flowery oration by the redhead who had never got over the molasses pie. Miss Tinkham was toasted by Oscar for her beauty, her glamor, and her unsurpassed musicianship. Then Jasper proposed a toast to Mrs. Feeley—the Queen Bee, the ruling spirit.

THE END.

BOOKS IN REVIEW

By JOSEPH ANTHONY

VERA BLOOM, daughter of Sol Bloom, chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, has written a collection of memoirs that manages to be interesting without benefit of startling revelations. She is honest enough to admit, in **There's No Place Like Washington**, that she enjoyed meeting political bigwigs; and levelheaded enough to view them as human beings rather than as special darlings of the gods.

Vera Bloom

Miss Bloom recalls that when Alexander Moore, our Ambassador to Spain in the palmy days of King Alfonso, was being coached on royal etiquette before his presentation to the Queen, "he was told that he was to bend over and kiss the Queen's hand while he counted eight, and then rise.

"He remembered the bending over, and the hand-kissing, but forgot how many he was supposed to count—so he just kept his head down, and murmured: 'Say when, Queen, say when!'"

This, Miss Bloom adds, was the beginning of a firm friendship.

From her ringside seat at the de luxe circus of Washington society, Miss Bloom watched with an observing eye the procession of aristocrats, shirt-sleeve statesmen, social butterflies and social climbers, patriots, lobbyists, and even a few hard-working spies.

Published by G. P. Putnam's Sons, N. Y. Price $3.

WHEN an American who has already won a solid reputation in other fields blossoms out as a poet at the age of forty-five, that's news. And when the poetry happens to be as sound as **Russell W. Davenport's My Country**, it's good news.

This passage will give you an idea of the distinguished simplicity of his style:

Russell Davenport

"America lives in her simple homes:
The weathered door, the old wisteria vine,
The dusty barnyard where the rooster roams,
The common trees like elm and oak and pine. . . .
She lives like destiny in Mom, who cooks
On gleaming stoves her special fricassee,
And jams and cakes and endless apple pies.
She lives in Pop, the family referee,
Absorbing Sunday news with heavy eyes;
And in the dog, and in the shouting kids
Returning home from school, to memorize
The history of the ancient pyramids."

Mr. Davenport resigned a magazine editorship to become the organizer of Wendell Willkie's first pre-convention campaign, and another one to write this book. In this case he isn't working for a lost cause.

Published by Simon & Schuster, N. Y. Price $1.50.

"WE SHALL not likely see that brand of courage again which was displayed so abundantly during America's first year at war," says **Lowell Thomas** in **These Men Shall Never Die**. "Valor there will be, rich surpluses of the American fighting spirit flaming in men well-armed and well-equipped. These men will not have to endure the ordeal of the men of the first year, who on many battlefronts held and pushed back the enemy virtually with bare hands."

Mr. Thomas' book tells in a vigorous style the stories of the most spectacular exploits of that first bleak year.

Published by the John C. Winston Co., Philadelphia. Price $2.

COCKEYED CROSSWORD

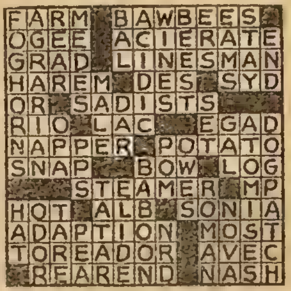
BY TED SHANE

HORIZONTAL

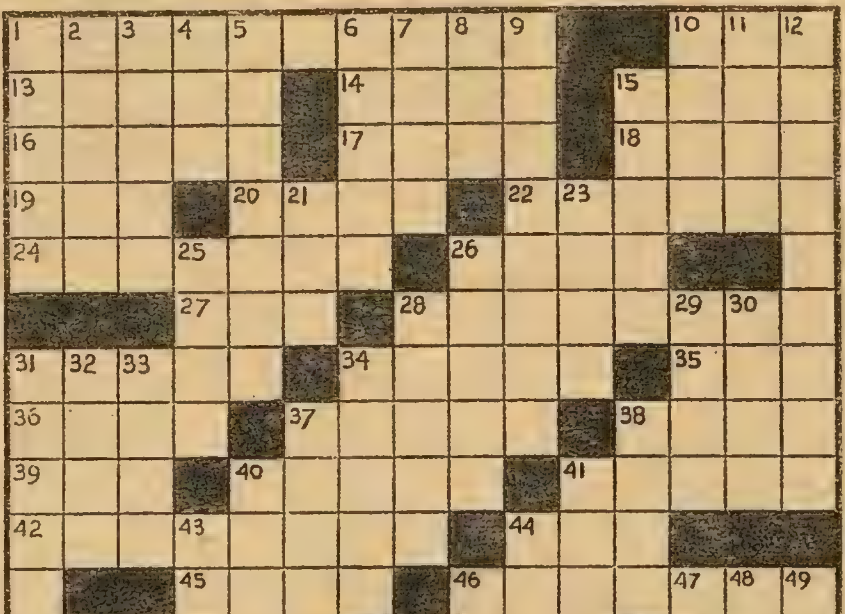
1 Sourpusses are filled with the this of human kindness
10 Resort for the well healed
13 May's mom and pop (all wet, too).
14 Anagramed part of China makes Norse god
15 Shark warrens
16 Hie in high
17 He mustn't be around for World War III
18 Pigboat sties
19 Catch on?
20 Ribs
22 Perambulate à la peasant
24 He made a clean-up at the hospital
26 Glamorpuss
27 Bed-sheet Looey
28 What many an old shaver or country cut-up does
31 Slightly nuts to you and you!
34 All present German ones are backward
35 Hurly-burly
36 What no woman does after she reaches thirty
37 Turn an old hen's head before Christmas dinner
38 What the thirsty corpse ordered
39 Well-known crossword play
40 G. I., with thumb to nose, extends fingers toward Hitler
41 Fertilizer factories
42 Teapot typhoons
44 Amount of world Japs wanted
45 Crafty, ain't they?
46 Served cream of tartar with tongue
50 Kind of entrance the Thin Man likes
53 This is a little hollow
54 Ogres Marry Apes (abbr.)
55 Musical double-talk
56 To carry an aria, tenors must have plenty of this
58 He who gives blood in the battle of the home front
60 Madame Discord (an old offender!)
61 Hard to get, harder to pay back
62 Overheated in the upper story
63 What Mr. Dewey is also
64 Dirty looks on fancy sticks

VERTICAL

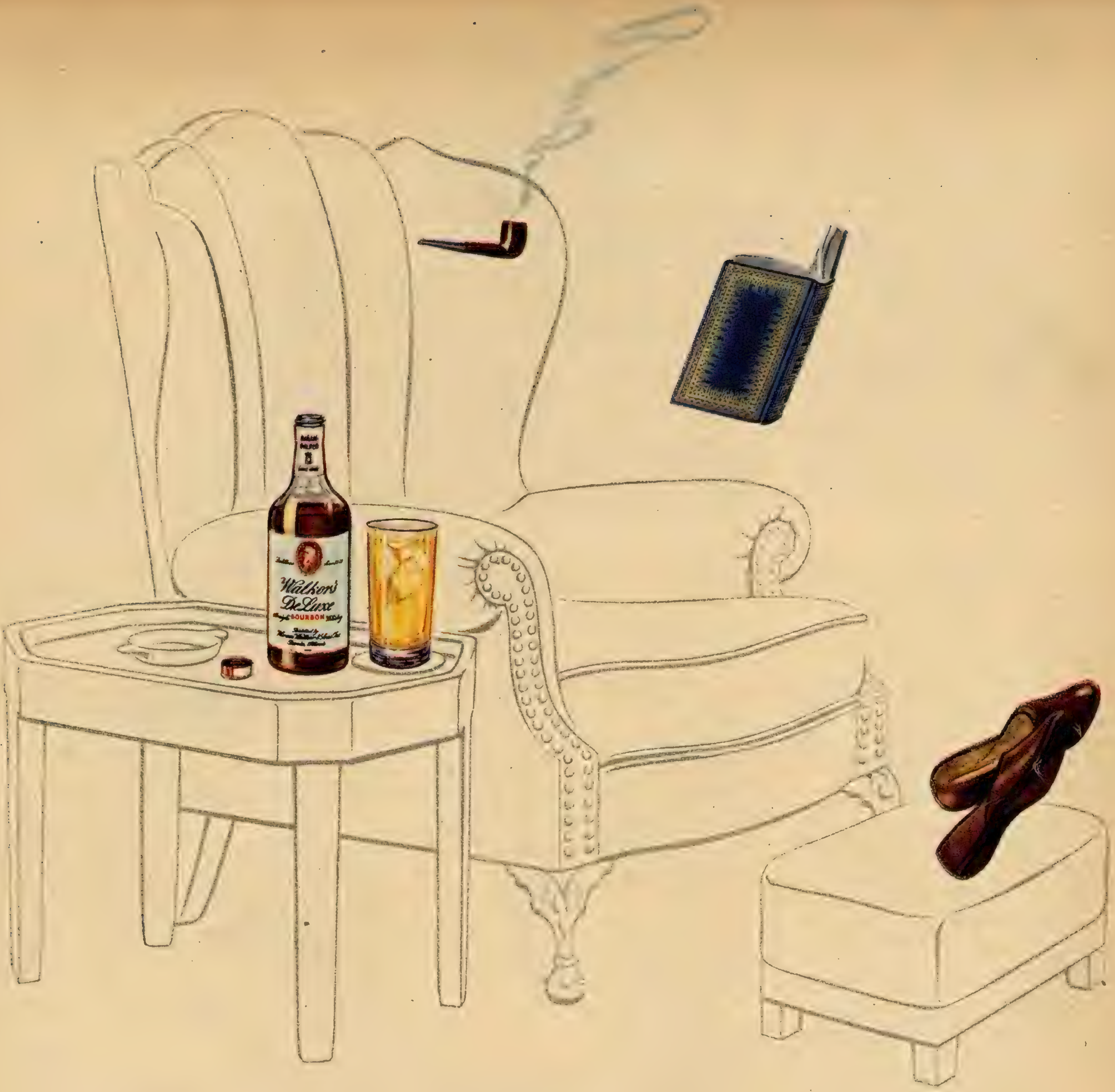
1 Subbasement baritone
2 Elevated mobile snorebox
3 Up a stump
4 Many an old drip gets caught here
5 Kinda gittin' on
6 Prewar paper shortage most folks suffered from
7 Whose voice is Who's Who with Eddie Cantor?
8 Alias Bess
9 Cause of Grandma's twitch
10 This will explode all over Europe next spring, cause an uprising
11 A pain in the neck (or anywhere else)
12 An ass and his wife, the assess, wind up by being tax collectors
15 Enjoin the dogs to move faster
21 Fifty between six
23 Norway's turned quislings
25 Pouches' produce and potables
26 Devices for finding furniture in the dark (they bark!)
28 2 A. M. opera, rendered by child sopranos
29 Wolf's apartment
30 First housing project
31 Old-Fashioned mechanic
32 The jitters
33 The Fourth shall be Last
34 Southland supersand
37 Line Army must crash to score touchdown in Berlin
38 It's kicked around, struck at, beaten into the ground by teamsters and racketeers—but it's a game thing
40 Mr. Intestinal Fortitude
41 Dagwood's biggest problem at home
43 Phffts
44 This one is equal to fifty Zeros
46 De King's Engalish, kinda kicked around
47 English movie actor, *cf.* hotel sign: —— Disturb!
48 Chew scenery while beating the blustering breast
49 Urges someone to break his neck in the name of good, clean fun
51 Ghost's overcoat
52 Many an old nag would run away with some old hunk of horse meat but for this
53 Where many a decent woman does a strip act
57 One of Christopher Robin's beastly pals
59 This is just plain worthless



Last week's answer



The answer to this puzzle will appear in next week's issue.



Four clues – can you "type" a man by them?

① **The pipe**—it's a famous make. And a clue to the fact that he isn't easily satisfied, that he doesn't like mediocrity—it takes a really good thing to interest him.

② **The book**—it's the work of a great historian. So it's a clue to his intellect. He has a fine and discerning mind. He appreciates fine things.

③ **The slippers**—not "homey" enough to indicate a man who has a lot of stay-at-home leisure. They're the slippers of a busy man—he gets around a lot, learns a lot about many things, has a certain travel-gained wisdom.

④ **The whiskey**—most telltale clue of all. It's Walker's DeLuxe Straight Bourbon—that in itself says everything about this man that *all* the other things say.

Walker's DeLuxe These two words mean a **great** straight bourbon

Straight bourbon whiskey. 86 proof. This whiskey is 4 years old. Hiram Walker & Sons Inc., Peoria, Ill.

ALL SOLDIERS ARE HANDSOME

Continued from Page 24

the plutocrat. Mrs. Frink and Nina hastened to the foot of the stairs, where they stood waiting.

Nina said, "How did you sleep, Uncle Ben?"

"Terrible."

Mrs. Frink said, "How was the breakfast?"

"Terrible."

"Was the chocolate too hot?"

"The chocolate," Uncle Ben said, "was the temperature of rain water."

"Did you like the rose?"

He peered down at her. "Was that gasping bloom a rose?"

"Yes, dear."

"Oh, well. In that case," Uncle Ben said, "it was very nice. Very."

His ponderous descent of the stairs completed, Mrs. Frink said, "Nina's husband is arriving today."

He paused. He looked interested. "Well! Anxious to meet him."

Cutting a swath through his womenfolk, Uncle Ben trudged to the small table beside the fireplace and sat down creakingly in the easy chair beside it. He began puttering with his mail, gradually working himself into a temper over his inability to open envelopes.

"Blasted things!" Uncle Ben muttered. He struggled vainly to slip his thick finger into the end of one. "No—don't get me a paper knife. Last time I used one I slit a fifty-thousand-dollar contract in two. Envelopes!" He jerked mightily.

"A can opener?" Nina offered tentatively.

"No!" Uncle Ben said testily. "Forty years I been losing my temper opening letters. If there was a peaceable way of gettin' into 'em I'd have found it."

Mrs. Frink withdrew tactfully. Nina perched on the arm of the old gentleman's chair and lighted a match for his cigar. Uncle Ben mellowed somewhat.

"Nina, my child," Uncle Ben said, "you are my only joy. If it wasn't for you I wouldn't visit this screwball household. That father of yours! Crackpot inventor!" Uncle Ben snorted. "That's what a woman gets for popping off and marrying some turkey a week after she met him. You'd never have done a thing like that," Uncle Ben said.

Nina patted his head. "Wouldn't I, dear?" Nina managed feebly.

"Too much sense," Uncle Ben said complacently. "You're all Abbott. You revive the good strain in the family."

She said, "Are you going to give papa the money he wants?"

Uncle Ben puffed at his cigar. Uncle Ben was weighty about it and chose his own time. Looking at him, Nina found a twinkle brewing in his eyes.

"Because of you," Uncle Ben said, "I might. On one condition."

"Yes?" She caught her breath.

He was not fooling. He was deadly serious. "On condition your young man comes up to my expectations," Uncle Ben said. "I'm making mighty sure we haven't got another goon in the family I'm going to have to support."

"But—" She stopped. She was appalled.

"But what?" He was instantly suspicious, alert.

"Nothing." Nina paused. Nina said faintly, "He—he—he'll be here."

THE railroad station was a-swarm with soldiers. All trim; all sun-tanned; all so much alike. Sergeant Jeff Jones, tall and loose-limbed and with straight dark brows set over very blue eyes, stood a little at one side with a smaller and more florid soldier. Awkwardly Jeff Jones held a pink rosebud in his hand. He craned his neck over the crowd. He tucked the pink rosebud in his cap.

"Here." Jeff pointed. "Do you think she can see that?"

Barney said, "What's that for?"

"My wife. So she'll recognize me."

"Are you kiddin'?"

"She sent me a wire," Jeff said. "Told me to wear a pink rosebud in my buttonhole so she'd recognize me. How d'you like that? I wired her back to wear a red ribbon around her neck. Hey—" Jeff tensed. "I think that's her."

Barney gave a low whistle. "Not bad!"

Barney was unheard and was forgotten.

The girl was straight and aloof and white-faced. She wore something in brown checks that went with her tumbling brown hair. Jeff elbowed his way toward her. He loomed.

"Hello," Jeff said.

She turned. She seemed startled. "Hello," Nina said coolly.

There was a pause. He looked her over candidly. His eyes played over her with a kind of secret amusement and he saw that underneath her calm she was panicky. He said pleasantly, "Well! You aren't as bad as I thought you might be."

Her brows lifted. "Is that in the manner of a compliment?"

"In the manner, yes."

She looked at him. She tried to remember. In uniform he still looked like any Yank establishing a beachhead; it was what had aroused her patriotism; he was so typical. She said, "I see you—you wore your rosebud."

He took off his cap. "Yeah. We husbands are wearing rosebuds this season!"

"I'd really have remembered you anyway. The minute I saw your face it came right back to me."

"It's that kind of face. It only comes back to people when they see it."

They looked at each other.

"Well," Jeff said, "we might as well go home."

"No—" Her panic rose to the surface. She glanced around. "Let's—let's have a cup of coffee," Nina said.

"O. K." He was casual.

They went into the station coffee shop and they sat down and ordered coffee. Jeff liked her. He looked at her and he liked her and it showed very plainly in his face. It was easier over the coffee. Words came.

Jeff said, "I suppose we ought to get acquainted. Have you got any parents?"

"Oh, yes." Nina looked at him. "It's usual, I believe."

"Who are they?"

She groped. "Well—people. Rather nice people. For their type."

"What type?" He was interested.

"A little crazy. All except Uncle Ben. He's normal. Papa invents things."

He had a deep rolling laugh. Under his amused eyes a glow came and deepened on the girl's cheeks. His laughter brought a quick impulsive response. Then Jeff was smote a smart blow on the shoulder from behind and Jeff looked up into the red face of Barney, the redder for his celebration of his imminent return to civilian life.

"Hi-ya, pal-o-pal-o-pal-o-pal!" Barney said loudly. "This the li'l' woman?"

Barney was introduced. Barney was got rid of. But by the time he had weaved joyously through the door a restraint was on Nina again, and she wondered: What manner of man was her husband? They walked out of the coffee shop.

OUTSIDE, Nina paused. The flames in her cheeks went deeper and she said, "You can come home with me. But you mustn't expect—" She gulped.

He looked down at her. Jeff said, "You mean we're just friends?"

She nodded. "Just friends."

The amusement in his eyes worried her. Jeff said, "Why did you marry me?"

"You know why I married you," Nina said. "We were intoxicated with the war. I—I married you for morale."

"Whose morale? Yours?"

"Of course not!" She was resentful. Nina said, "Didn't it help any?"

He stood over her, not moving. "No."

She stared up at him. It was incredible. Nina said, "You are impossible. I wish I'd never see you again."

His mouth was pressed tight over his teeth. He was angry. Jeff said, "That goes double. Good-by!"

She saw his broad shoulders swinging off, away, out through the crowd toward a taxi. Remembrance came. Nina ran after him. She buffeted the crowd.

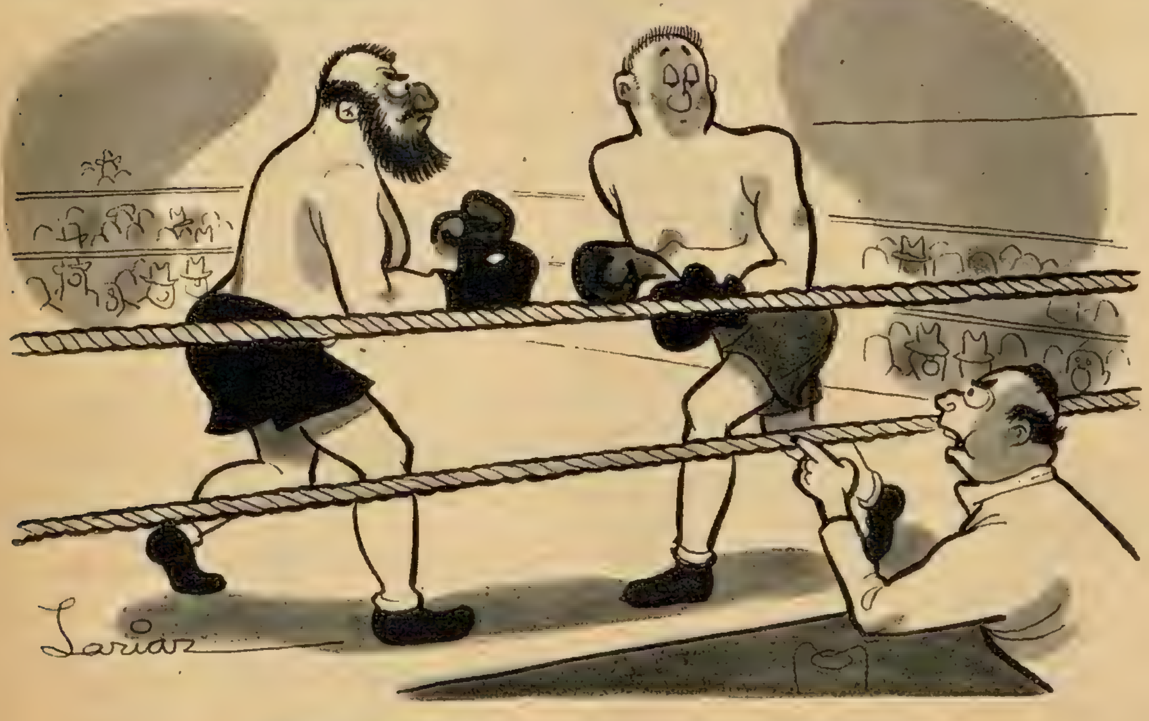
"Please—" She was breathless. "Please," Nina said, "wait a minute. I—I take it all back."

He turned from the taxi, surprised. "Come again," Jeff said.

She said lamely, "Please, I—I—I want you to meet my family."

(*Continued on page 50*)

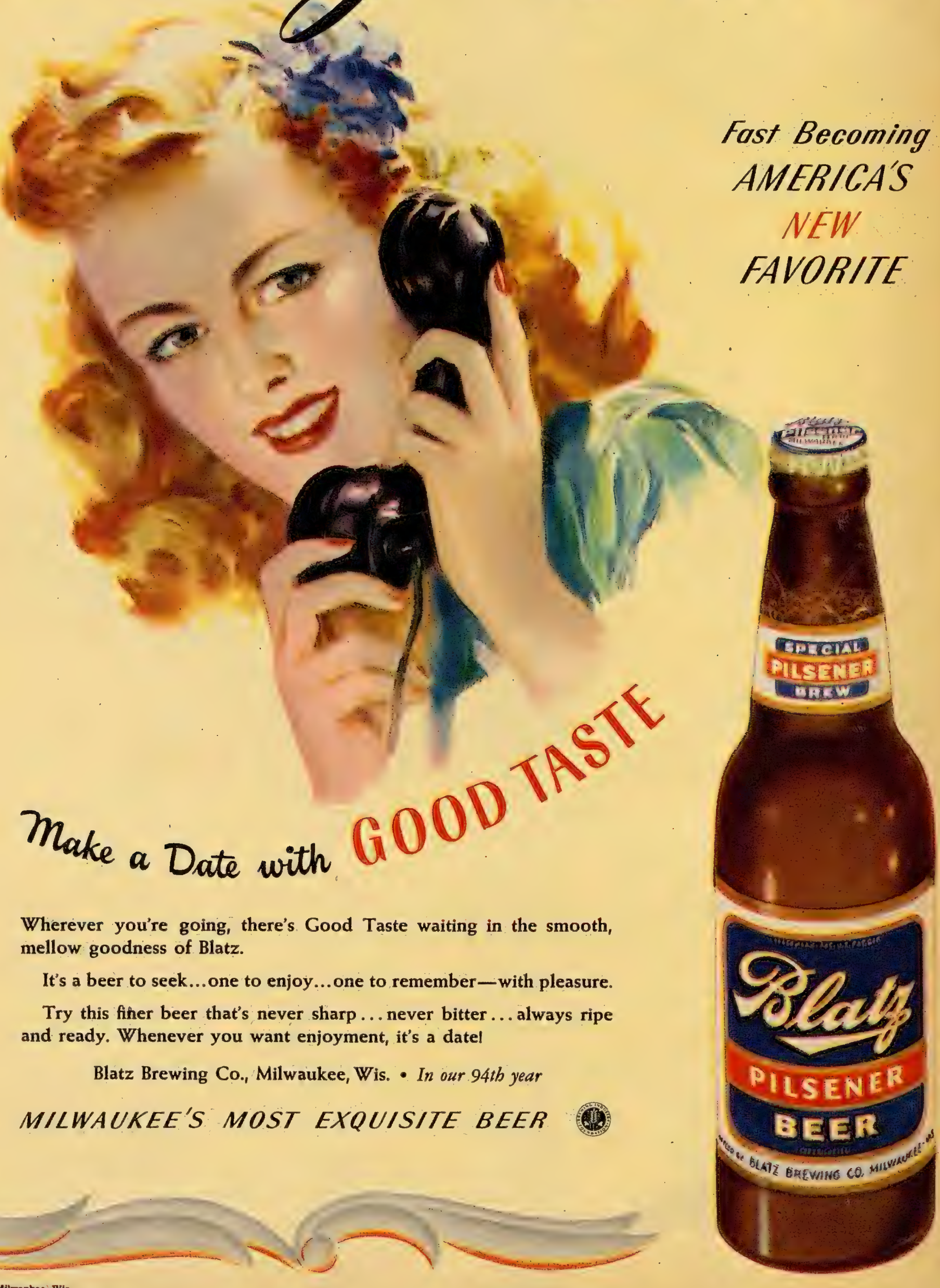
THE HOME FRONT



"Keep punching! His chin is there somewhere!!"

Blatz Beer

Fast Becoming
AMERICA'S
NEW
FAVORITE


SPECIAL
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Make a Date with GOOD TASTE

Wherever you're going, there's Good Taste waiting in the smooth, mellow goodness of Blatz.

It's a beer to seek...one to enjoy...one to remember—with pleasure.

Try this finer beer that's never sharp... never bitter... always ripe and ready. Whenever you want enjoyment, it's a date!

Blatz Brewing Co., Milwaukee, Wis. • *In our 94th year*

MILWAUKEE'S MOST EXQUISITE BEER

Copyright 1945, Blatz Brewing Co., Milwaukee, Wis.

(Continued from page 48)

Jeff said, “You mean you want to introduce me as your husband?”

“Y—yes, if you don’t mind.”

He shrugged. “O. K., babe.”

In the taxi they made polite talk.

She said, “I wonder how Velma and Harry are getting along.”

He was impervious. “Never heard of ’em again after that night.”

It was like that. They were strangers.

UNCLE BEN was glumly shuffling cards at the gin-rummy table. Mrs. Frink, fluttering out of the kitchen region, said vaguely, “Is this him, dear? How nice. Do excuse me a minute—the dessert hasn’t jelled and Etta is having hysterics.” At the door she turned and added, “Just make yourself at home.”

“Thanks!” Jeff called after her.

Nina said, “Uncle Ben, this is Jeff.”

Uncle Ben looked the soldier over. “Hrrumph!” he said.

Nina told him, “Uncle Ben never gives a snap judgment any more.”

“How do you do, sir?” Jeff held himself carefully.

“Sit down, sergeant,” Uncle Ben said.

“Thank you, sir.”

Nina removed the checked thing, revealing a frilly white blouse and a skirt. “Uncle Ben gave a snap judgment once,” Nina said, “when papa married mama. He’s regretted it ever since.”

“Play gin rummy?” Uncle Ben inquired.

“I’m a fair hand, sir.”

Nina said, “I’ll see if your room is ready.”

Uncle Ben’s head reared up. “His room?”

She said quickly, “Our room.” Nina escaped up the stairs.

Uncle Ben grunted, picked up the cards and started shuffling. “How much are you prepared to lose?” Uncle Ben said.

“Nothing, sir.”

The old gentleman’s brows came together. “Meaning you’re busted?”

Jeff smiled. “Meaning I usually win.”

The old gentleman peered closely at the soldier. There was a moment, and Uncle Ben chuckled deeply. He started dealing.

They were fairly into the game when the cellar door flew open and Mr. Frink bounced out, his wispy hair on end and his invention in hand. His invention was a model of a sort of helicopter.

“I got it!” Mr. Frink cried excitedly. “I got it! This bolt does it! Maude!” Mr. Frink cried, running with his toy. “Where are you, Maude?”

Uncle Ben gave a snort of disgust. “Inventors!” Uncle Ben said. “If you were an inventor, young fellow, I’d throw you out by the britches.”

Nina called down from the top of the stairs, “Mama! Will you ask Etta to come show me where the clean sheets are?”

Frisby appeared out of the dining room. “Dinner is served,” Frisby announced.

AT 11 P. M. gin-rummy excitement ran high. Mr. Frink yawned pointedly. “Well, to bed,” Mr. Frink said. “Another day, another dollar.”

Uncle Ben grunted. “You never made a dollar in a day in your life.”

“I am always trying,” Mr. Frink replied. He climbed the stairs exhaustedly, and Mrs. Frink followed. Nina sat curled up, nodding in a chair.

“Why don’t you go to bed?” Uncle Ben asked.

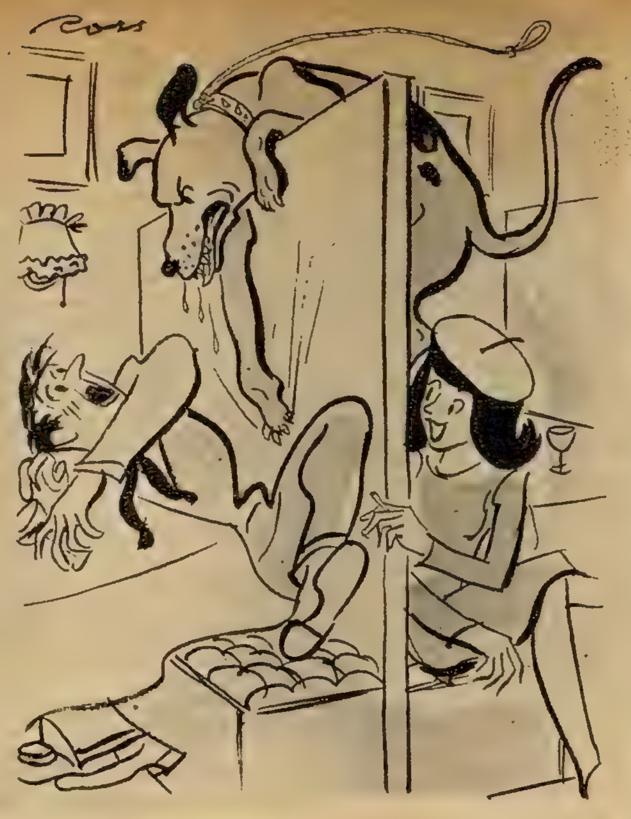
“I’m not tired.”

“You were snoring.”

“I was not,” Nina said with dignity.

The game continued for an interval. Then the game was over and Uncle Ben pushed back his chair, chortling happily.

“Well! Well!” Uncle Ben said. “How much do I owe you, sergeant?”



“Be careful, he bites!”

There was a settling up and Uncle Ben was relighting his cold cigar and was puffing contentedly. He turned to Nina.

“Nina, my child,” Uncle Ben said, so that she started awake, “I like your young man! Guess our deal stands.”

Good nights were said and Uncle Ben went upstairs. Jeff stood a little at one side. Nina got up out of the chair. They looked at each other.

“Well,” Nina said, “I’m going to bed. Your room is the second door on the left, upstairs. Good night.”

He did not move. He held himself, looking at her. Jeff said, “What did Uncle Ben mean? About a deal?”

She moved around the room. Nina said warily, “Nothing.”

He went to her. She felt the strength of his hands on her shoulders. “What did he mean?” Jeff said. “Tell papa.”

She said lightly, knowing there was no escape, knowing she was cornered, “If you must know, Uncle Ben said he would give papa a check for ten thousand dollars to launch his invention if he liked you. Because,” Nina said, “Uncle Ben thinks mama’s marriage did not turn out very well. Papa never makes any money and Uncle Ben doesn’t like inventors, and he said he wouldn’t give papa a cent unless he approved of you.”

His eyes became smoky with anger. Jeff said, “So that was why you ran after me in the station!” He seemed to get angrier, thinking about it. He said, “A fine homecoming this turned out to be! After pining for you ten months in foxholes—”

He gave her a long look. His look turned Nina’s cheeks hot. He didn’t say anything more; he swung off, away from her; he strode across the room with long steps; he was at the door.

She cried out, “Where are you going?”

His hand on the knob, he turned. “I’m leaving,” Jeff said. “Good-by!”

“No—” Urgency mixed up her breathing. She ran after him. She did not care. Then Nina stopped, lost in his silence, not knowing what to say. “You can’t go,” Nina said lamely.

An eyebrow lifted. “Why not?”

“We”—she swallowed—“we’d be sunk,” Nina blurted.

This interested him. He said curiously, “Sunk?”

She told him. Nina spilled it out all in one long run-together sentence. While she was pouring it out, an idea hit her, and Nina finished on a note of hope.

“What you need,” Nina told him, “is a good long rest—after all that fighting. Why don’t you just stay here and rest up a few days? You won’t have to do anything except play gin rummy with Uncle Ben. We’ll all wait on you,” Nina said. “You’ll only have to crook a finger for whatever you want.”

Jeff considered. Jeff looked at her, weighing the matter. There was a pause, and his hand left the doorknob.

“O. K.,” Jeff said. He looked at her severely. “But mind you,” Jeff said, “if I have any reason to complain of the service I’m getting, out I go.”

JEFF had breakfast in bed. Jeff had out-of-season strawberries and small hotcakes that he gave Etta minute directions for making. Jeff had slippers put on his feet and was given the morning paper to read. He was waited on and was fed and was pampered.

He was often mysteriously absent, and he had some telephone calls. But they seemed to be business calls. Nina was glad it wasn’t some girl calling up.

Never had Uncle Ben seen anybody pampered like that before. Even a soldier and a hero. “Never saw a happier marriage,” Uncle Ben purred. “That girl must be nuts about you. Don’t let it go to your head, my boy.”

“No, sir,” Jeff replied.

He was good at gin rummy. On the fifth day Uncle Ben managed to win a couple of dollars, and the modest victory put the old gentleman in a whimsey.

“Nina, my child,” Uncle Ben said mellowly, chuckling over the settlement, “tell you what. We’ll have a party tonight at Luigi’s. I’ll present your pixilated parent with his check. You’ve earned it, my dear.”

THERE was one thing: Uncle Ben knew how to get good service out of waiters. Uncle Ben was terrific and was ceremonious in a black tie. Uncle Ben loved to dog up. The long table in Luigi’s glowed with tapers and was attended by Luigi himself. Mrs. Frink was charming and vague in blue lace, and Mr. Frink looked excited and inspired.

“Don’t think about your inventions while you eat, dear,” Mrs. Frink murmured. “Indigestion, you know.”

Uncle Ben loomed benignly at the end of the table. Uncle Ben said ceremoniously, “I am very pleased with Nina’s marriage. Hrrumph! I can see it’s no screwball affair like her parents’. Therefore, Henry,” Uncle Ben said magnanimously, “through no fault of yours, I have decided to be generous once more.”

Uncle Ben reached into his pocket. The eyes of the Frink family fastened upon the gleaming white envelope he drew out of his pocket. Uncle Ben smiled upon them mellowly, and a couple was passing their table, a young man with a sunburned face and a girl with auburn hair. The young couple cried out joyously, and as Mrs. Frink reached for the envelope Uncle Ben lowered his hand.

Jeff turned. Jeff cried, “Harry! Velma!”

The girl and Nina fell upon each other and the girl kept crying, “Imagine seeing you here! Just imagine!”

There were introductions all around, and Uncle Ben said jovially that they must sit down. But Velma declined, saying they were joining a party.

“We had to stop by,” Velma said warmly. “We had to make sure you were still together! I always said there’s no reason a girl couldn’t be happy marrying a man the day she met him!”

Uncle Ben’s head came up. He stared after the departing couple.

“Wot’s ’at? Wot’s ’at?” His mind closed around the simple fact. “You married Jeff the day you met him?”

Jeff tried. He said gallantly, "In love, there is no time, sir. I knew her a day—I knew her a million years." Nina gave him a look of gratitude.

"One day!" Uncle Ben repeated, his outraged mind grappling with the thought. "Why, your mother knew Henry here a whole week before she married him! You're more scatterbrained than she is." Uncle Ben addressed himself loudly to Nina, getting quite purple in the face. "Do you know what this fellow's work is? Do you know if he's got any brains? When the war's over will he be able to support you? By the way"— Uncle Ben swung his irate glance on Jeff—"what is your work, sir?"

Jeff was hesitating over that when he felt the impact of another hearty blow from behind. "Hi-ya, pal-o-pal-o-pal-o-pal!" a cheerful voice greeted, and Jeff found himself peering up into the celebrating and civilian face of Barney.

He greeted Barney warmly.

"Long time no see," Barney pursued his dialogue cheerily. "Say," Barney said, "you got started with your invention yet?" He weaved gently, came back to dead center and addressed Uncle Ben. "Some day get ol' Jeff to tell you about his invention," Barney said. "Used to talk about it alla time when we was crouchin' in them lousy foxholes. Guy's a regular Thomas Edison," Barney said. "Yessir. Make a fortune some day. Get him to tell you about it."

Barney weaved off. The eyes of the Frink family rested hungrily and hopelessly on the white envelope in Uncle Ben's inert hand.

THERE was a calmness about Uncle Ben. Uncle Ben chewed on his cigar and he peered at Jeff from underneath his shaggy brows. Carefully Uncle Ben said, "You have invented something, eh?"

"Yes, sir." Jeff held himself formally; he looked back at the old gentleman.

Uncle Ben chewed on his cigar awhile. His brows came closer together. "What did you invent?"

Jeff shifted a little. "It's nothing much, sir."

"What is it?"

"Well," Jeff said, "it's a letter opener."

Uncle Ben looked at Jeff. He looked at him, and there was something of suspended animation about Uncle Ben. He stopped chewing on his cigar. Jeff said doggedly, "My dad used to have such a heck of a time opening his mail every morning, it used to worry me. I started working on the idea as a kid. But I forgot all about it until I was in those foxholes, with lots of time on my hands. I don't suppose," Jeff said, "you ever noticed how much trouble everybody has opening envelopes, sir?"

Uncle Ben choked a couple of times and he seemed to have caught something in his throat. When he could talk again Uncle Ben said gruffly, "Gadgets. They never work. I've tried 'em all."

"This one works, sir! It's collapsible, too." Jeff reached in his pocket. "I had a model made the last few days in a machine shop. Trouble with most letter openers is they tear. Mine cuts right next to the edge. Here, I'll show you—"

He took the envelope out of Uncle Ben's hand before Uncle Ben could pull it away.

THEY got home after midnight.

"If you'll excuse me," Mrs. Frink said calmly, "I'll just wake up the help and tell them succor has come."

Mr. Frink bustled excitedly toward the cellar door. "At last!" Mr. Frink cried happily. "A man can think!" He disappeared into the cellar.

Uncle Ben plodded happily up the stairs to his room in order to play with the letter opener. "Greatest invention of the age!" Uncle Ben gurgled. "We'll see about a patent in the morning."

Nina stood. Nina looked at Jeff. Nina said, "A fine lot of pining you did for me in foxholes; You were thinking about letter openers."

Jeff said, "I pined for you. I was thinking how swell it would be to get a letter from you. Then I started thinking how I would open it. That's how I started thinking about letter openers again."

"You never wrote, even once."

"Didn't have your address."

She said, taunting him. "Ho-ho! If you didn't have my address, then how did you wire me?"

"Ho-ho! I found you in a telephone book when I got back."

She wanted to go. She could not go. She really must go. Nina said, "Truly?"

He came to her. "Nina." He spoke her name seriously. "Why do you think I came straight back? Don't you know about love at first sight? I wanted to tell you, you're the one for me."

He looked at her, doubtful of her. Nina said, gulping, "I—when I ran after you at the station, it—it wasn't just because of Uncle Ben."

She could say it; she could be herself. Nina was against him and her voice was muffled against him, and Nina knew: it was all right.

Everything was going to be all right.

THE END

FIRE ON THE DESERT

Continued from Page 17

Tom and I. It was the day he left for the Army. We walked out to the town site and I saw the place. They're building there, you know. Houses. It'll be a town some day. They've laid out some streets and they even have a few foundations in—"

Ed said, "I know. They're building."

"There was one house on the edge of the desert," Martha said. "If you looked out of the windows you could see all of the sky. There was room enough for all of us. I thought when Tom came back he'd have a place. We went in, just to find out about it, just to ask. And the girl thought we wanted to buy, and it was only a small deposit."

"And you used Tom's money," Ed said.

"What's wrong with that?" Judith said sharply. "What's wrong with Tom's money?"

"What's wrong with mine?" Ed said.

"It's not the money," Judith said. "It's the house. Do you think it's been easy for ma these last years—tagging across the country like gypsies, living in a hut or under anything that looked like a roof?"

"I went where there was work," Ed said.

She was silent for a moment and then she said, "We were all glad to come, pa. You know that. We've seen it build and grow, and now there's something coming. A place to live, a house. Ma wasn't built for a trailer; she wasn't built for running. Do you think it's been easy for her?"

"I never said it was easy," Ed said. "I never told her that."

"What did you tell her?" Judith said.

Looking at her then, angry, challenging, he could see how much like him she was.

He didn't answer immediately; he clenched his fists, looking down. He said finally, "She knew what I was. I never hid it."

"You never hid it," Judith said bitterly. "You never tried."

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He said flatly, "We're getting out of here, Martha."

Judith stood up suddenly, looking at her father, her long body taut with anger. She said, deliberately, clearly, "I know you, pa. I'm like you and I know. It's always the thin edge with us. It's always the next place, tomorrow. We're always looking and we never know what we're looking for. We think we're free. We're afraid of traps and ropes. But what are we free for, pa? The smallest tree in a forest has roots. It's tumbleweed that's free."

Then she was gone. He could hear her words still, but they made no pattern in his mind; they were separate and distinct, and each one alone meant nothing. He was watching Martha.

"Will you come?"

Someone moved in the other room. Dodie's head peeked into the kitchen. "Ma!" Dodie said. She was wearing candy-striped pajamas and they flapped around her ankles when she walked. "Ma, can I stay up a little while?" she said. "I'm not tired."

"Yes," Martha said. "Come in."

Dodie climbed onto one of the kitchen chairs and sat there swinging her legs, her eyes moving from Ed to Martha.

"Are you hungry?" Martha said. "Do you want some milk?"

"No," Dodie said.

Ed said, "Martha—"

Dodie said suddenly, "Are we going away?" And Ed knew that she had heard.

"I don't know," Martha said.

"Where are we going?" Dodie said.

"I don't know."

"I want to go to Gawgia," Dodie said decisively. "Pa, can we go to Gawgia?"

"Maybe," Ed said. "Maybe Georgia."

He turned to the door, waiting for Martha's answer, but there was none; she sat stroking the thin silken hair of the child. Finally, he opened the door and left.

The highway ran straight through the valley toward the lights of Las Vegas. Here and there along the right of way a neon sign blazed in the darkness.

HE walked toward one of the lights, the toes of his shoes scuffing desert earth, stubbing against a stubborn bit of green that hung desperately to the thirsty earth. The land wasn't bad; needed water, sure, but what land didn't? They'd be using water out of the dam one of these days when things got straightened, feeding it in irrigation gullies to the earth, and he wouldn't be surprised, then, if a man could make a go of it. They'd done that in other desert country down in California, made the sand blossom, made the desert fruitful.

Damn land, anyway. That was the past and he was done with it; he'd watched a farm burn up under him in the Dakotas and maybe it was just as well, for he had no hand nor any head for farming. Martha knew that. She'd seen it, too; the earth shriveled and wrinkled like an old woman about to die. Was it any easier then, watching the children, knowing the land was dead? Was it any easier then, even with the house? Roots died too; harder than a leaf maybe, but just as dead.

He'd been happier at the mine, when he took that job after the farm went, than he'd ever been on his acres; and happier still on the construction job in Minnesota. And there were other places, other things. No, let the wind have the farm; he was glad to be moving and seeing.

He crossed the highway toward the neon-lighted building, a man big-boned and solid, yet looking somehow lean because of the very size of him. His face was tanned almost a brown-black and his hair was clipped very short, to a bristling stubble that lay cool under the stained brown felt hat.

The Grove took its name from the small group of willows in which it stood. It was a wooden building, low and rambling in the Western style. The front of it had once been painted brightly, but now the color was faded and the paint was cracked and peeling. Inside, the main adornment was a long bar, dimly lit, stretching almost from the door to the back wall. It was full of people, mostly men.

Ed found an empty stool, and Mac, the bartender, slid a stein of beer across the counter to him. Mac said, "Hear from Tom?" Ed looked up sharply at the name, and he said shortly, "He's all right."

"He's not over yet, is he?" Mac said.

"Yes," Ed said. "He's over."

"What's he with?"

"He's footing it."

"Hell," Mac said, "I'm glad to hear someone's walking. You'd think they're all flying; that's all you hear."

"No," Ed said. "He's got his shovel."

"I was in the last one," Mac said, unsmiling. "You know what I did with the shovel."

Ed began to laugh, feeling warm and safe in the long smoke-filled room. He finished the rest of the beer and, putting down the stein, he saw Hart Dennison come in. Hart was rolling a little, drunk a bit. They had come out at the same time, Ed and Hart; and Ed remembered the early days when they were building and Hart was damning the desert and the sun and sand. But he stayed. He called to Hart and Hart grinned broadly and came toward him.

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"The American Congress is strange," a Russian actor once reported, after a sitting in the spectators' gallery of the House of Representatives. "A man gets up and speaks and says nothing. Nobody listens—and then everybody disagrees."

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

Hart said, "Drink's on me, Ed."

"I'll stand you one," Ed said.

Hart shook his head. "Big day, Ed. I'm pulling out."

"Are you?" Ed said.

"I got the flivver outside, all packed," Hart said. "Hell, this place is finished. They'll be bringing in the clerks next. Ever been to California, Ed?"

Ed shook his head.

"I got a brother on the coast. It's wide open. Sunshine and orange trees. Don't you read the ads? Why stay out in this hole? We came in to build, didn't we? Well, we built it for them. Let the pretty boys come in now with their pencils and typewriters."

They drank together and then Hart started toward the door. Outside, Ed saw Hart hadn't been fooling. He had his flivver there with his stuff dumped in the back seat. Watching him, Ed felt oddly excited. The coast? Hart threw the flivver into gear; he was chanting:

"Oh, find me a home
On the lone prai-ree,
Where the rent is cheap
And there's privacee—"

"I'll pick an orange for you," Hart yelled; then the flivver roared into life and started up the highway into the night, its red taillight gleaming. Ed watched it disappear and then turned back to the Grove.

He thought of Martha, and for a moment the memory of her, quiet in the trailer kitchen, touched him with a vague yearning pity. But what did they want of him? Had he ever hidden what he was? He felt a surge of anger that they demanded, even silently, a man that he was not and never had been.

Let it come, he thought; let them decide now. And, free of the pricking tangents of thought, he felt a sense of release. What he had to give could be given only on his own terms and it was better to face it and be done with it than to let it hang, quiet, foreboding, and blank as a fog. He looked up to the sky. It lay without borders, free and triumphant as a man's soul. Then in the same instant, without warning, the sky was suddenly spattered with color and he stood rooted, immobile, until the idea formed and the word made sense in his mind: Fire. It seemed to him that an incredible amount of time passed before, finally and heavily, he began to run.

THE buildings that were aflame lay at the front part of the plant grounds. They were low wooden buildings, barracklike, that held the executive offices and the engineering offices. Behind and around them the plant buildings lay in the form of a huge square-edged U. In an irregular line behind were the Prep plant and Neutralization; to the left was a huge storage area: coal and salt, primary peat, fuel oil, and the large looming masses of the magnesite silos. To the right was a weaving line of wooden buildings; small stores, machine shop, bus bar.

Spaced irregularly over the whole area were the minor sinews of the plant: rotary kiln and tunnel kiln, proportioning bins, dry mixer, pellet storage, magnesium-chloride tanks. And in a long marching line, enormous against the desert sky, was the heart: the Metal Units buildings, cavernous and immense, sucking in the raw ore, spewing out the gleaming white bars of magnesium.

At the hoses Ed watched the water pour into the mass of curling flames; it was swallowed by the fire, nonchalantly, easily. Thompson was gone somewhere. The dark mustached man was back at his side again, plucking at the nozzle, saying, "Let me—let." Ed let him take it. His face felt raw, cracked; he ran his forearm over his brow.

He wanted Thompson. He pushed through the crowd, suddenly aware of how cool the night was. The night wind sucked across the desert. He placed his palms together and rubbed them dry. The flames were leaning with the wind, inward toward the heart of the plant. At the corner of the building he saw a man running, one of the engineers.

"Evans!" he called.

Evans stopped and turned blankly.

"Have you seen Thompson?" Ed said.

"Thompson?" Evans said.

He seemed to be trying to recall. And then abruptly, without answering, he started to run again on a diagonal line, toward the fire. There was a door in the flaming building, leading to the engineering offices. Evans ran with his hands held braced in front of his face. The two hoses were playing on the door and Evans went through the flames under the shield of the water.

"Evans!" Ed shouted.

He watched the man disappear into the flame-framed doorway. Until then, all of his action had been reflex. The fire had come with the sudden swiftness of natural disaster, spitting against the peaceful sky the tongues of its terrible, illogical surprise. Now, past the first shock of reaction, watching the man Evans, it roared into the landscape of his consciousness, deadly, dangerous, and personal, and the memory of the moment before—the moment when it still did not exist—was gone, and it was as if for all the past time he had been here, a single, straining, running man, prancing in the long shadows of the rising fire.

He had to find Thompson. He swung to the rear of the flaming buildings. The fire hadn't seeped through yet. In the driveways between the buildings a flash of red showed occasionally, as scraps burning or embers. He turned back again without pausing. He crossed a deserted corner of the large parking lot at the turn of the spur road, hurrying back toward the hose once more. Someone caught his sleeve and called his name, but he pushed forward until he felt the grasp still holding. He turned and he saw then it was Judith.

She said sharply, "I was looking for you."

"What's wrong?" he said.

"You're all right?"

"Damn. I'm all right. Go on back."

She was still at his side when they broke through the crowd to the pumps. They were trying to cover the door that led to Engineering. An edge of the flaming timber fell to the ground, hissing, sputtering. A cascade of sparks crept along the sand, gutted, and died in the dry earth.

"Mason!"

Ed turned to face Thompson. Thompson was weaving on his toes, breathing heavily; he looked as if he had been running steadily and constantly since Ed had seen him last. There was a long gash on his face.

"Can you handle a dozer?" Thompson said.

"Yes," Ed said. "I was looking for you."

Thompson said, "Damn it, man—"

Ed swung to Judith and he said harshly, "Go on back now."

"I'm staying," Judith said.

"Go on back. There's nothing you can do."

"No," she said. "Maybe I can help."

Thompson's voice broke in angrily, "Mason—"

He turned helplessly, and then Thompson was hurrying him back past the hose, talking swiftly: "I want that back area cleared. Any rubble, wood, anything, out there between the offices and the rest of the plant. Kick it back to the flames, clear it out. I just want dirt in between. Maybe you can do it with a dozer, maybe you can't. I've got some men out with shovels. We've got to keep that fire here—"

Ed said, "I was thinking—"

"Shut up," Thompson said. "You listen. Come straight down the driveway between Prep and Neutralization. Do you see? A straight swath. As broad as you can make it. We've got to keep it away from the Units. You know where the dozers are?"

"Yes."

"Then get moving. If you see anybody else can handle one, take him along. No, tell him to come to me first. I'll be down around the hose. They're trying to get files out of Engineering. Paper. Saving paper!"

"All right," Ed said. "I know what you want."

"Good luck."

HE found the bulldozers parked out under the unloading sheds at the rear of the plant grounds. Two dozers had been pulled out of line, leaving gaps. Climbing swiftly to the cab, he jerked the door open.

He sent the dozer rumbling out from under the shed, clawing down the stretch between Metal Units II and III, driving in the huge, wavering, red weaving shadow of the windowless wall. He cut around the edge of the Prep building, listening to the grunting roar of the dozer as she turned.

Only now, alone in the weaving cab, did the events of the night begin to form a pattern, curious, involved, seeping into the past, stretching into the future. The shock of the fire, momentarily, had thrown him completely into the present; but this moment, now, was part of something that had

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begun a long time ago. Why was he here?

He drove down the side of the Prep plant and, his view unhampered, he saw the bite of the flames full against the sky ahead. He made the final turn into the driveway behind the burning buildings. The flames were close, leaping. As he brought the dozer around for the final run, the cab ceiling cut off his full view of the fire and he felt that he was driving beside a red wall, tottering, about to fall, creeping forward.

Why was he here?

Out of the fund of the numberless days, the image of the sun—round, full, and blinding—rose in his mind. It had been desert then, in the first days, raw and harsh and lonely. Because there had been nothing there before, only sky and sun and dry earth, they came barehanded, first to shacks and tents, a drifters' camp, a pin prick on the endless sky of the desert. They came like the Masons, the men and the women and the children, to thrust the metal fingers of their machines under the flaccid skin of the earth.

What had come after in the never-ending hours, the slow march of wood and concrete, the sound of driven nails, the beat of machines cursing the earth, drawing it and forming it into predestined shapes: that was theirs. On dead and ancient land, their hands had created slowly and inevitably. This was his touch, his magic, his footprint, ineradicable in the shifting, seeping, forgetting sand.

He knew suddenly, with a sure wisdom, that now he would never leave, no matter what the fire left; and that the fire itself was not important, only that it had happened. In a crisis, in a war, in a fire, in a man's life a time comes to stand; and in the action, standing and holding, lies all the meaning of the past, rooted in the man, rooted in the earth. He had thought once to create a world with no boundaries because somewhere, sometime (watching the farm go, watching the root die), he had lost something, the anchor, the goal; and, losing it, he had thought he had lost all need for it. But the need always remained, and where a man's hands created, there was a place, there a root went down.

The dozer lurched down the driveway and the prow of it caught and held on the thin streaks of burning wood, bodiless flames, flinging them back toward the fire. He was standing in the cab, shouting; he could hear his voice over the roar of the fire.

The dozer drove, cutting its swath between the burning buildings and the rest of the plant beyond. Overhead, a part of the wall crackled, held for a moment in swaying grace, and then began to fall. Through the window he saw it coming. He didn't move to stop the dozer. Leaning forward, he drove into it. The whole swaying, flaming mass caught on the prow, edged toward the cab. He felt the heat, sudden and intense, reach, grasping for him. The dozer lurched and whined; he cursed and kicked it as if it were some live animal under his thighs. The flaming wall teetered, leaning back toward the flames, as he held the dozer driving steadily against it. Insistently, monotonously, he kept thinking: Mine, mine, mine, mine. . . .

IN the back area, near the hospital, the women had brought coffee and water. The men sat on the sand shivering in wrapped blankets. Ed came reeling out of the darkness toward the thin curling smoke of the coffeepots, and Judith saw him first and said softly, "Pa." He showed no surprise at finding her there and he squatted by her side as he sipped his coffee.

"How is it going?" Judith said.

"It's under control," Ed said heavily. "It's under control now."

He looked up curiously when Martha swung a blanket over his shoulders. He knew then he was cold. Martha said nothing. She bent to him and ran her finger down the raw harsh skin of his face. For a moment, wondering whether she would have gone with him, he looked to her and he knew she would. Turning to her, he had an odd fleeting sense of strangeness at the familiar face, the quiet woman who knelt now at his side. Then it was gone and he spoke tiredly, reaching to the sure core of her understanding.

"The girl," he said. "I saw her."

"What girl?" Martha said.

"The one who came," he said. "She came about the house."

Martha said softly, "It's all right, Ed. I'll see her tomorrow."

"No, take it," he said. "We'll stay."

His eyes found the fire again. It roared into the night, but it lay hemmed in by sky and desert, bounded and limited, framed in its place. Beyond, in the Units, the floodlights were still burning white. They held. The heart of the plant throbbed, unmoved, unheeding, active, pulsing with life. He watched the lights burn, knowing he was home, and this was the place, this was home.

THE END

Eric Peters

COLONEL STOOPNAGLE'S FICTIONARY

(Unabashed)

OARGY: Excessive indulgence in rowing.

FLAWTIST: He makes flukes on flutes.

MANTELOPE: Deer's head over the fireplace.

QWARTET: Four singing soldiers.

BARBEQUEUE: Line of Chinese waiting for a roasted pigtail.

EXSPIRE: A fallen steeple.

GOLIARTH: A big fibber.

IGNIGHT: To set fire in the evening.

ADMURAL: Wall painting of a Navy chief.

PROFANNYTY: Swearing after sitting on a tack.

Art Cohn

THE author of Forever Winsor, Art Cohn has managed to carve out a career as checkered as a zoot suiter's sport jacket. Starting as a sports writer, he covered the sagas of the grid and the diamond for seventeen years. Overlapping these happy days were eight semesters as sports editor of the Oakland Tribune. When the war broke out, Cohn packed his toothbrush and typewriter and became a war correspondent for the International News Service. In this capacity, he jeeped, footed and planed through Australia, New Guinea, Turkey, India and Ceylon for eighteen months. At present he is writing a book in southern California.

FOREVER WINSOR

Continued from Page 19

Winsor was not fired, though. The job was. The publisher figured it would be more simple that way.

The girl went home and began writing, with nothing but an unquenchable determination. She knew what she wanted and was willing to wager five years of laborious effort against a fame which might never materialize. She kept herself to a strict schedule of six to eight hours daily. She allowed herself one week off every four months, and whenever she missed a day's work she made it up later.

She finished her five-year schedule with three months to spare by working eight hours a day seven days a week last fall. Through those years she was not Kathleen Winsor, nor was this the twentieth century.

She was Amber St. Clare, and she, Nell Gwynn, Buckingham, and Charles lived in the spirit of the Restoration.

And she wrote Amber, the story of a woman with a passion that admitted no impediments; then completely rewrote it —six times in all, and many passages dozens of times. She would mull an hour or two over the name for a minor character. She became immersed in the customs, language, manners, literature, and feeling of the Restoration.

EVERY other novelist dealing with the era, even Defoe in Moll Flanders, permitted his story to be prejudiced by the age in which he wrote, but Winsor, by projecting herself so thoroughly into the past, has achieved an impressive objectivity. She denies that she has put anyone she knows into her novel.

"My central characters, while imaginary, could have lived," she says, "and if they had, I think recorded history would still be exactly the same."

How sincerely she has portrayed the life and hot times of Charles II may be judged by the fact that professional lint-pickers who have explored the book for anachronisms thus far have found none.

This historical accuracy was not luck. It was part of Winsor's plan. To achieve it she read 356 books on the Restoration, several of them three and four volumes in length. She made voluminous notes on them and has her notes indexed and bound in four fat books, with enough material left over, she says, for ten novels, none of which she intends to write.

Her diaries attest that she spent 1,303 hours reading, 380 hours indexing her notes, 3,284 hours writing—a total of 4,967 working hours—in which she produced 9,241 pages or 2,310,250 words.

Amber is a monument to perseverance if not genius.

The painstaking research was something less than a labor of love because she frankly hates to read.

"I have never read a book for pleasure," she admits; "only for a purpose."

Though she has never enjoyed a book, as a sophomore at the University of California she spent her summer vacation reading the Harvard Classics, not missing a page of the fifty volumes.

"I hadn't read anything, so I decided it was time to find out something," she explains simply.

If Winsor never read a book for pleasure, neither did the critics when they got to Amber.

"With the aid of inept phrasing, a curiously awkward and bald style, and a lack of feeling for her subject," wrote Carl Carmer, author of Stars Fell on Alabama, in PM, "Miss Winsor has succeeded in straining from her material all that is glamorous, interesting, or important."

"Many readers will never finish so poor a book," growled Time's pundit.

"Miss Winsor is a born storyteller," conceded William Du Bois in the New York Times, "for all her turgid amateur writing, her incredible sentiment, and her hothouse appraisal of history."

All admitted, however, that Winsor and Macmillan had a hit on their hands, a rather eloquent commentary on America's I. Q., 1944.

As Amber possesses "the world's most marketable commodity—enough for ten women," so does Winsor's book contain enough seductions, abortions, perversions, miscarriages, and boudoir amours for a bookshelf.

That Winsor has mirrored a boisterous, profane era, its obscenities and perversions, in which "English men and women in good society had lapsed into an excess of gallantry, enjoying the orgy with incorrigible frankness and abandon," the staid old House of Macmillan concedes. That it deleted more than a hundred pages of daring writing is a trade secret it does not choose to discuss.

Nor will Winsor, on the record.

"People don't like to be human beings," she sighs. "They hate to be reminded that physiology is, after all, physiology."

ALTHOUGH I can prove by newspaper files that I wrote the first review of Amber five years before it was published (reporting that her first draft ran some 1,800 pages, I fearlessly predicted in 1939 that it would be "easier to read than to lift"), the truth is that Kay had started writing a few semesters previously.

The Painted Vamp, her first major work, was a saga of Gloria who loved not too well but two characters. One was George, a playboy she secretly and sometimes openly loved while being kept by a big meat operator from Chicago whose name Winsor cannot recall. That is not strange, because in the story Gloria forgot it too, and had to go outside and look at the

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

"A lot of people say that 'necessity is the mother of invention.' There was no necessity for an airplane, nor for the motion picture; just some fellows who wanted to make those things. They didn't know why, and they didn't get upset about difficulties."

—Charles F. Kettering, vice-president of General Motors.

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

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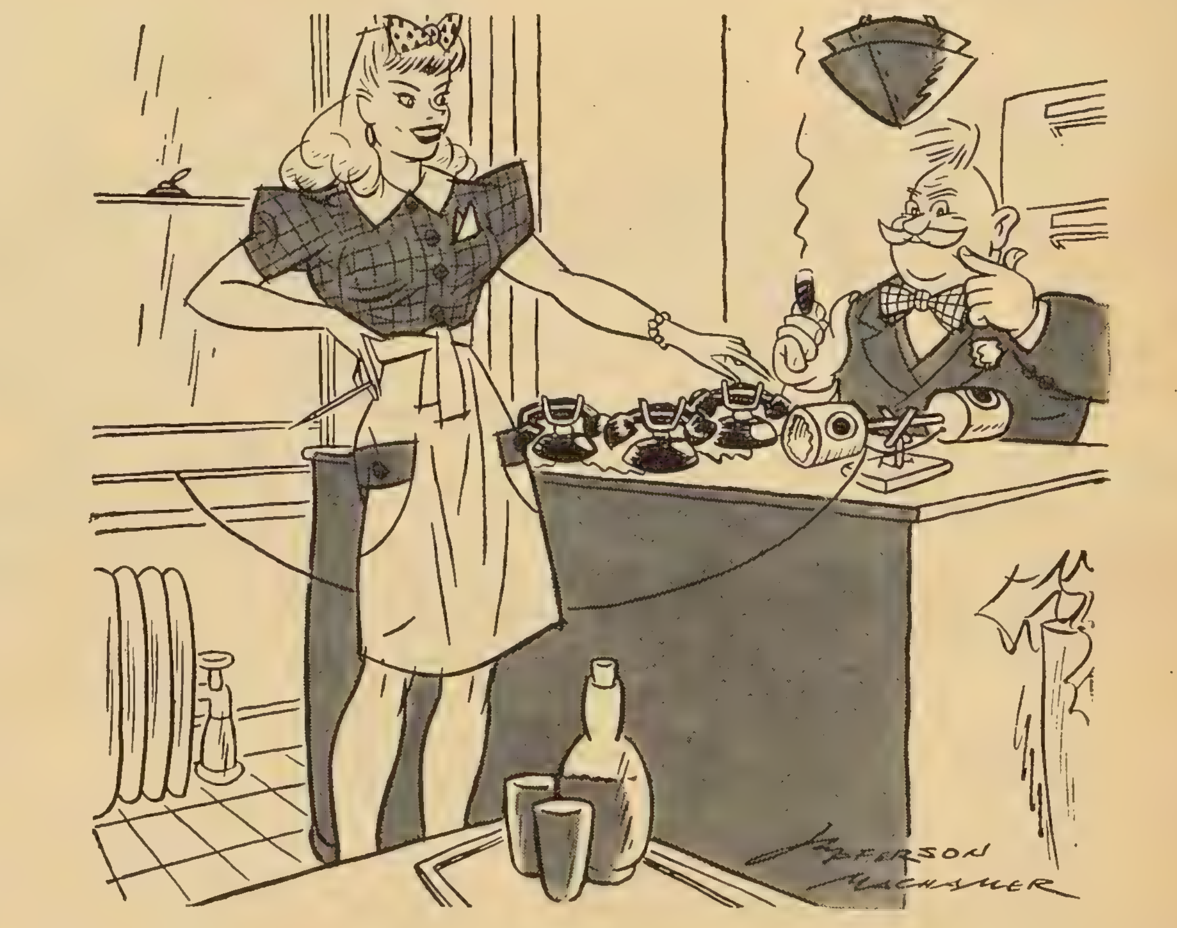

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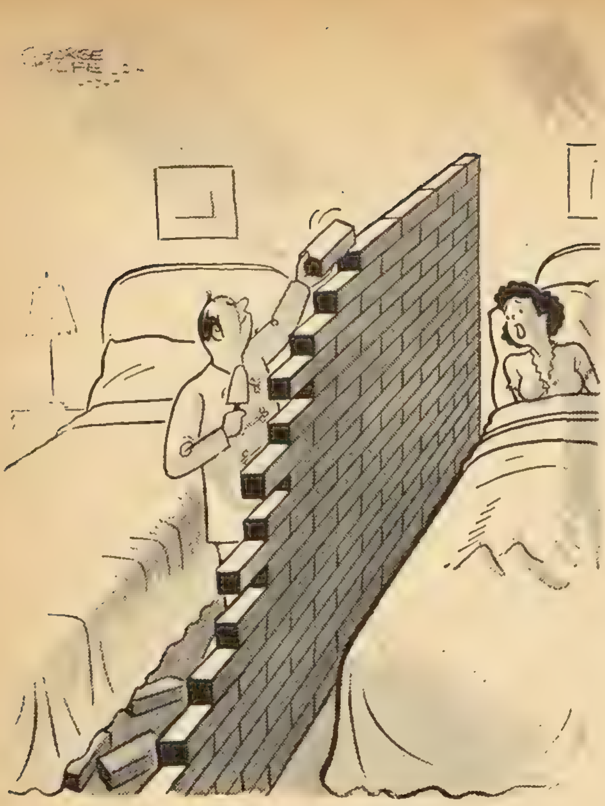


"Still mad, dear?"

mailbox. All she remembered was the balance of his bank account and, one day, when her memory was unusually keen, she pushed the dope under a passing streetcar, made a mental note of the $47,863,265.33 she would inherit from his estate, saw her former boy friend in the crowd around the stalled trolley and, bringing the story to a real sock finish, cried out, "Oh, George, *now* we can be married!"

Winsor wrote that at the age of eight.

"The Painted Vamp was an opportunist," she says with the affection a woman can have only for her firstborn. "As a matter of fact, Amber St. Clare was an opportunist too."

As a matter of further fact, Kathleen Winsor is an opportunist, too.

Her parents never read The Painted Vamp, but her father, a solid citizen who sells real estate in northern California, suspected his daughter was not confining her literary flights to idyls of birds and bunnies. He offered her ten cents a page for everything she wrote on the English sparrow.

The English-sparrow phase probably temporarily postponed her emergence as a historian of profligate lords, their courtesans and illegitimate children, but even the study of wild life did not occupy all her time.

"I was in the fifth grade at Alameda Grammar School," she recalls, "and my greatest ambition was to grow up and be a vamp. I used to walk around with my eyes half closed and dream of lying around on a tiger skin."

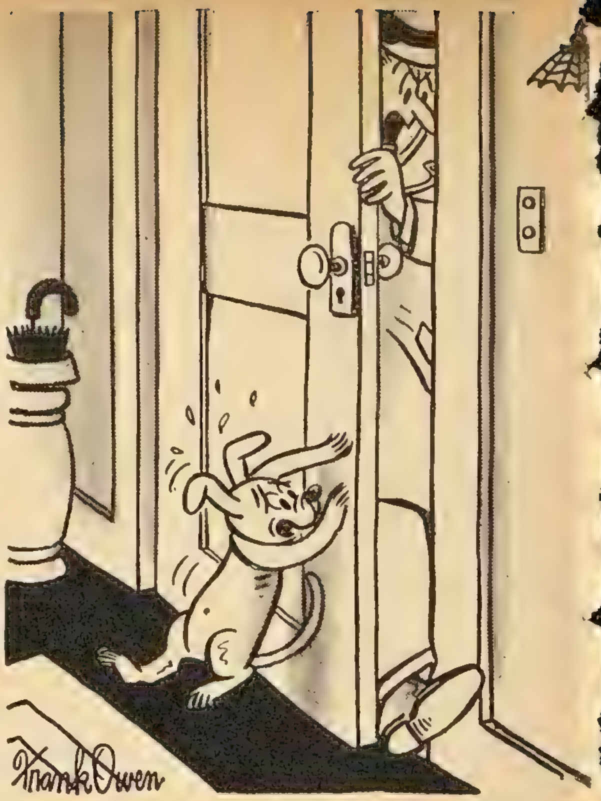
But her eyes have been wide open ever since, penetrating brown eyes which, in a glance, usually strip even strangers of all pretense. She has no illusions about herself or her world; her philosophy is short-term optimism and long-term pessimism.

Winsor, who looks like a Conover model, is a proud, spirited girl, endowed with a brain as brilliant as her face and body are beautiful. She accepts and employs these gifts without self-consciousness or conceit. She has an incisive sense of humor and is the first to tell a joke on herself.

"As Bob told me the day he left for overseas," she recalls, "'Well, Kay, we've never denied ourselves anything you wanted.'"

Her formula for living is simple.

"I just make up my mind what I want—then get it."



"For Pete's sake, stop guarding. It's us!"

Now that she is about to become an upper-case celebrity with all the accoutrements, including the inevitable Amber lipstick and Amber step-ins, it is only a matter of time before someone traces her ancestry to the Restoration period, possibly to Charles II himself.

The strange thing about it is that it's quite possible.

One of her grandmothers, who made a study of antecedence, traced the roots of the family tree on her mother's side to Charlemagne and on her father's to 800 A. D., when, it is said, one of her forebears was King of Turkestan. Most of

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Kathleen's folks missed the Mayflower but made the fifth or sixth wave in 1630. She was born in Olivia, Minnesota, but has lived in California since she was five.

"I'm English on both sides," she says, "except for a grandmother who married a wild-eyed Irishman. He's still living in Seattle, danced a jig at eighty-two, and whenever I do anything I shouldn't, the family says I take after grandpop."

Out of her five-year seclusion came not only a best seller but a deep sympathy for the Restoration period.

"Charles was one of the most maligned men in history," she claims, "all because of his great capacity for living."

Winsor, like that period, is a contradiction of naïve worldliness.

She permitted no one except Bob, not even her parents, to see a word of the manuscript until she mailed it to the publishers. For several weeks Amber kicked around the desks of editors, readers, and clerks, and one day an editor wired her for another copy.

"That is the only one," she replied, and it was.

Hairs turned gray at Macmillan's. Here was what they were positive was the novel of the year. Readers had been taking it to the beaches, on trains and subways; it might have been lost a hundred times. As soon as Amber was found she was preserved forever on microfilm.

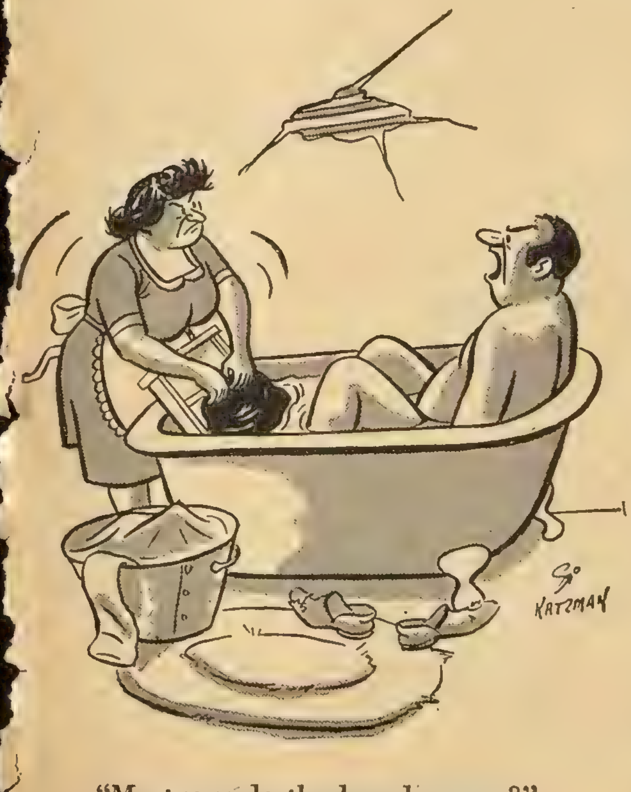
When the publishers asked Winsor why she had not protected herself with at least one or two copies of her five-year project, she replied, "I dislike carbons; they're so much trouble."

She has a curious sense of values. "The first day I met her," her agent, Annie Laurie Williams, recalls, "Kay said, 'Only $100,000 as a starter? Can't you sell just anything to the movies for $250,000? That's what I read in a column once.' "

An old friend may be forgiven for viewing that with a jaundiced eye, although it is true she never placed much value on money. Even when she was earning eighteen dollars a week she was buying hats at thirty-five dollars per copy, tailored suits to match, and expensive perfume.

"My tastes aren't expensive," she once said; "it's only that everything I want seems to cost so much."

Already her enigmatic *mots* are creating a vogue, but she was not trying to be funny, shortly after her arrival in New



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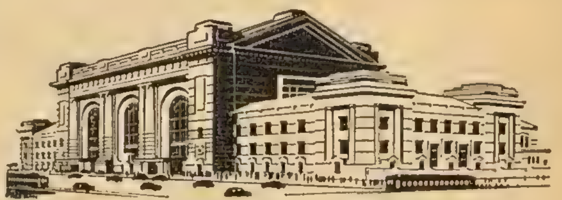

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3000 MILES OF HOSPITALITY—FROM CLEVELAND TO THE PACIFIC COAST

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York, when Dick Mealand, story editor for Paramount Studios, asked her, "What's the cost of the book?" He meant, of course, the price of the movie rights.

"Three dollars," Winsor said.

In the original manuscript, I understand, there is a nine-page description of a birth scene. Those who have read it say it is the most graphic ever written. Unfortunately it has been condensed into a single sentence, "So she had a baby," or words to that effect.

Winsor has never had a baby, nor seen a delivery. When I asked her qualifications for a treatise on obstetrics, she replied, "I never had bubonic plague, but I wrote about that, too."

Success did not completely surprise her. She was never sure her manuscript would be accepted, but she was confident that she had done the best of which she was capable, and that was her faith. When Winsor began the book her husband was playing his last year of football at California. As it progressed, he became an assistant coach at his alma mater, then joined the Marine Corps, and bounced around the country from boot camp to officers' school to training camp. Kay was never more than a couple of days behind, her manuscript growing heavier daily in her traveling case. She neglected neither of her loves. Bob always encouraged but never contributed to the story. He was in Guam when word came that Kay's five-year parlay had come in. That may have been the minute he forgot to duck.

THAT Winsor will be nominated by many to portray Amber on the screen is inevitable. She is already being offered screen tests by Hollywood scouts who have had a gander at the statuesque, curvaceous brunette who looks like Rita Hayworth and talks like Kate Hepburn. "But," she confesses, "I can't act."

This is not false modesty, but an honest estimate of her capabilities.

She is working on nothing now and has no idea when, if ever, she will sit down and write again. When interviewers ask her what will be the subject of her second book, she thinks of the six drafts that went into the work which ultimately was boiled down from a third-draft high of 1,919 pages to 972, still three times the length of an average novel.

"My second book?" she asks. "I've already written three."

THE END

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"Elsie, do we have a four-way stretch?"

THE "UNBELIEVABLE" BABY FLAT-TOPS

Continued from Page 23

to stand anywhere near a Kaiser shipyard, because you were apt to get hit by a new CVE at any time.

The result proves once again that you seldom see diamonds and doughnuts coming out of the same machine. But it can be said for the Kaiser CVEs that we got them with startling rapidity, and that they are nonporous. Also, by virtue of their twin screws and general lack of heft, they can turn corners like a polo pony. However, seasoned Navy officers—men accustomed to such home comforts as large slabs of armor plate—have been known, upon examining a Kaiser CVE, to shudder violently and grope their way to the air muttering, "No, no, no!" But they are exaggerating when they say that the interiors of the Kaiser CVEs seem to be made mostly of heavy cardboard. You occasionally come upon something that resembles a steel beam, although if you look more closely you see that it is simply a length of the same quarter-inch tinware bent into a sturdy L. And your shipmates are merely joshing when they warn you not to lean against any of the smaller beams lest they fold up on you and give you a nasty pinch.

Part of this condition is due to the fact that Mr. Kaiser often was forced to get his materials and fittings where best he could, a process at which he is talented. For instance, his CVEs are probably the only warships in the world having binnacles (the large ship's compass up on the bridge) built by the Lionel electric-train people who make those little living-room limiteds for Junior. Our CVE captains occasionally notice the "LIONEL" on the instrument when they look into it to see where they're going, and are seized by a twitch.

These are the ships that are now giving the enemy, particularly the Japs, another big reason for wishing that Mr. Kaiser had never been born. Ever since the first admiral walked around our first CVE, kicking its tires and wondering how it could be used to badger the foe, the CVEs have been used in ever-increasing quantities on ever more important assignments. The final graduation exercises of the CVEs were held in the boiling waters of Leyte Gulf, and they graduated *summa cum laude*, which means with plenty to spare.

BY now you may be wondering why we send the little CVEs out at all into the combat, or bullet, zone. Why don't we let the big carriers do the fighting, and let the little CVEs carry planes and canned goods out to Pearl Harbor?

The answer lies in the fact that we are no longer "striking" at the Jap-held islands in the Pacific. We are moving in and setting up permanent housekeeping. To give proper aerial support to an actual landing, many individual jobs must be performed by carrier-based planes. The huge convoys of transports and supply ships must be guarded from enemy subs and planes on the way out. Ready-to-go Marine and Army planes must be ferried out to start operating from the airfields ashore the moment they're secured. Antisubmarine and combat air patrols must be constantly flown over the scene of the landing to keep off enemy attackers. Additional planes must maintain a continuous photographic reconnaissance of the enemy areas. Other planes must fly the Marine and Army artillery spotters and ground observers. Still other planes must be instantly available to knock out enemy gun emplacements and other strong points not neutralized by our pre-invasion aerial and surface pounding of the objective.

E
T W
VXRT
LEO GAREL

"No inching, now!"

All this means a lot of vitally important but small jobs, each of which is normally done by a few planes at a time. And that's where a big carrier starts stumbling over its own feet. A big carrier trying to do a small job is like a heavyweight prizefighter trying to thread a needle. He just isn't built for it.

No matter how big a flight deck may be, practically anything you want to do requires the entire deck. When you land planes, they have to be taxied forward into the launching area in order to make room for the other planes to land. When you launch any sizable number of planes, they have to be spotted well back in the landing area so that the planes at the head of the parade will have room enough for their take-off run.

If you could spare a big carrier for each twenty planes or so, it would work just dandy, but you can't. The result is that a big CV will have fighters lined up in the landing area, ready to take off on a major mission, and just then two planes from an antisub patrol will come in and want to land. In order to land those two planes, every one of the fighters has to be taxied forward out of the way. Or the CV will just have finished landing thirty or forty dive bombers from a big strike, and right then the forces ashore will need three fighter planes in a hurry to strafe an enemy machine-gun nest. To launch those three planes, you first have to get thirty or forty planes out of the way.

A carrier deck, even that of a full-siz CV, just isn't big enough to give over pieces of it to various small jobs. Compared with a land base, the deck of even the biggest CV is about the size of a gum wrapper. And our carriers can't be made any bigger, because then they wouldn't go through the locks of the Panama Canal. Complicated, isn't it?

Add to this the fact that any carrier has to leave its base course and turn into the wind either to launch or to land planes, whether it's one plane or a hundred, and you begin to realize why small jobs make a CV captain gray-haired before his time. Also, in order to maintain proper support of a landing operation, a CV would have to stay in the immediate area, inviting day after day the destructive inventiveness of the enemy. It's an old naval axiom that if you stay in the enemy's back yard long enough, he's going to think up a way to do you bodily harm. And our CVs are hardly considered expendable.

This is the situation that has been solved by the CVEs. Solved beautifully. In handling the multitude of small hurry-up jobs necessary to give real air support to the task of chasing the Japs off their ill-gotten Pacific gain, the very smallness of the CVEs becomes an asset. A CVE will have only twenty-five or thirty planes aboard altogether, with most of them usually parked down in the hangar deck. Thus you move five or six planes out of the way instead of fifty. And a CVE, due to its extreme maneuverability, can turn into the wind, launch a couple of needed planes, and be back on course before you can say Henry J. Kaiser or Todd Pacific.

THE CVE was the ship for the job, if it could take the rough life involved. As a grueling dress rehearsal for our invasion of the Philippines, Saipan proved to our admirals that the CVEs could take it—take it day after day and give it back. At Saipan, the CVEs gave our marines and Army the closest air support of any of our Pacific landings up to that time. Their planes kept the Jap subs away from the transports, they knocked down Jap aerial attackers, they blasted enemy guns ahead of our ground forces, they flew the artillery and infantry observers, they flew the reconnaissance photographers, they even ferried out the Army planes as soon as the big airfield was ours. They did all this day after day, week after week, till the Saipan job was done.

They also made sure that the landing itself was not another Tarawa. The planes from the CVEs strafed the Saipan beaches minutes ahead of our landing barges, knocking out the Jap machine guns which otherwise might well have mowed down our marines as they came ashore. (The actual landing on Saipan was unusually free of casualties; the hell came later, after our forces were ashore.) Another evidence of a profitable lesson from Tarawa was the detailing of planes (CVE planes) to protect any individual landing boats that might get caught on the reef on the way in. If any landing boat had stuck on the reef, as at Tarawa, it would instantly have had its own planes overhead to protect it from enemy shore fire. We will never have another Tarawa. Saipan marked the first time in our Pacific war that we were able to give landing forces something resembling proper and full aerial support, the factor we knew would prove so vital in our invasion of the Philippines.

At Saipan, as in the Philippines, the little CVEs did a tremendous share of the job. They did it with their planes in one hand and their nerve in the other. They arrived off Saipan the night before D Day, and they left twenty-four nights later—*of their own volition.* Saipan was our first real answer to the question of whether the CVEs could stand the rigors of outdoor life. The Japs co-operated in the experiment with tireless enthusiasm. Their subs stood off outside the destroyer screen and pegged torpedoes into the formation. The CVEs side-stepped these like matadors. Jap dive bombers and torpedo planes harassed the little group time and again. Eight or ten Jap planes would press home an attack to test out the situation. The planes and guns of the CVEs would shoot five or six of them down in flames, and the rest would decide they had business elsewhere.

On Saturday, June 17, two days after D Day, the Japs really tried to make good on their nightly boasts from Tokyo that they would annihilate the CVEs. Just at dusk, when our CVEs were busy landing their planes from daytime missions, the Japs came in with fifty to seventy dive bombers in five simultaneous raids. This was it. This would answer the question.

It was quite a busy evening. Our fighter planes intercepted every one of the five raids at least fifteen miles out, and fought the Japs all the way in. About twenty Jap planes got in. The CVE and destroyer gunners went to work on these, the ships themselves were kept in a continuous hard zigzag, and when the smoke had cleared away, the total damage to the entire formation was one small bomb hit on one ship. A few CVEs and a handful of destroyers had completely routed fifty to seventy enemy dive bombers. That's hardly being helpless in the face of enemy attack. That "slingshot" worked right well.

The next night, Sunday, was also an extremely busy occasion, since the Japs had refused to believe Saturday. But again, when the smoke and din cleared away, the CVEs, *all of them,* were still staring Tojo right in the eye. Thereafter the Japs contented themselves with losing five or six planes at a time to the CVEs, having decided to go out of the wholesale business.

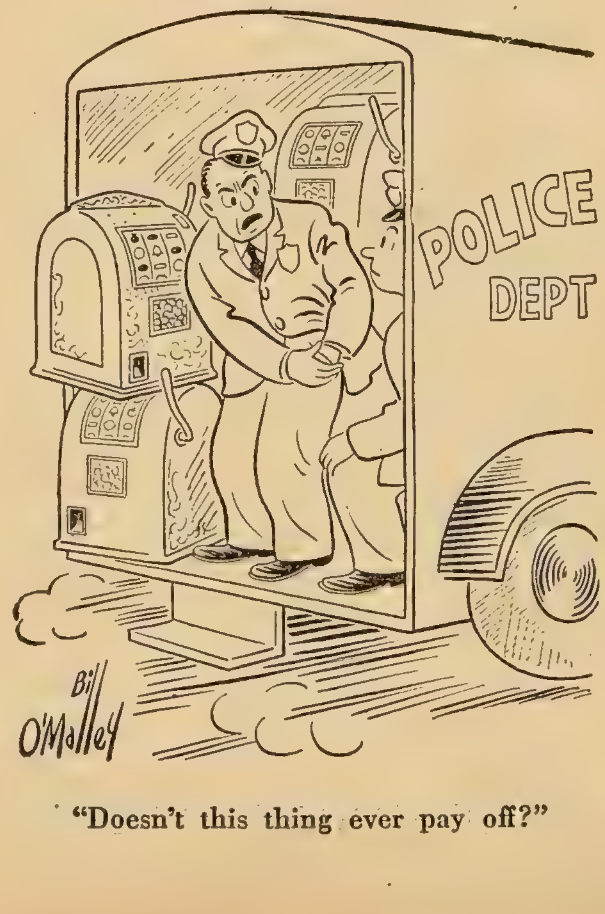
IF a CVE gets hit, it gets hurt. But, as in the case of Benny Leonard, former lightweight champion, who used to stand on a pocket handkerchief and defy all and sundry to strike him on the chin, hitting it is not as easy as it sounds. A CVE is extremely agile, and its planes and guns can put up an astounding and clawing defense. The Jap task force that came in at Leyte to sink our CVE sitting ducks, as they thought, were no doubt greatly mortified by the violence of their reception.

The Todd Pacific Shipyards out in Tacoma now have our third batch of CVEs in the oven. In the light of our hard-won CVE experience, these will have some improvements. They are being built on sturdy oiler-type hulls, with twin screws, better compartmentation, better bomb stowage, and better several other things. Our baby flat-tops are going into long pants.

In the meantime the men who sail our CVEs in the Pacific are going in with what they have and looking down the throats of the Japs. They're setting their course to Tokyo in a binnacle built by Lionel.

The old salts who have filled the years with their calls for the return of "iron men in wooden ships" can stop calling. The iron men in wooden ships have been back for some time. They're out in the Pacific, on our CVEs.

THE END



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The war is still on . . . and will be for some time to come.

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For *now*, as never before, a man should look at his wife and family and say, "What can I offer them for the future?"

And *now*, as never before, a man in America has a chance to answer this question—an opportunity to provide for the future.

That opportunity is War Bonds. No doubt you are buying War Bonds through the Payroll Saving Plan. Arrange to buy *more* War Bonds. All you can afford.

What's even more important—don't cash in those War Bonds before they mature. Stick them away in a safe place—and forget about them till you can reap the full harvest on them.

Now is the time to make your plans for peace of mind. Buy War Bonds and hold onto them!

LIBERTY MAGAZINE

This is an official U.S. Treasury advertisement — prepared under auspices of Treasury Department and War Advertising Council

THIS MAN'S WAR

CONDUCTED BY OLD SARGE

My son enlisted about two years ago and has been promoted at about ninety-day intervals through the grades of Pfc., Cpl., Sgt., S/Sgt., T/Sgt., and now 1st Sgt., in an airdrome squadron stationed in New Guinea. He writes that quite often 1st Sgts. are set back to privates and have to make the grades all over again. But an old friend, a retired 1st Sgt., tells me that a 1st Sgt. can only be put back in grade by court-martial for some act of gross misbehavior. Is the boy kidding me or is my friend mistaken?

R. C., San Jose, Calif.

Your son is right. In the A. U. S. authority authorized to appoint may terminate the appointment. See AR 615-5, 10-13, on appointment and reduction of non-commissioned officers.

* * *

I am the wife of an enlisted man with whom I've made six moves inside of six months. I have heard that transportation and all expenses are furnished one way for the family of an enlisted man once during the enlistment period. But I have been unable to get more specific information, such as what office holds this authority. Please supply this information.

Mrs. C. B., Coffeyville, Kans.

Enlisted personnel of the first three grades are entitled to one move of dependents and household goods after September, 1942, on a permanent change of station. Application should be made to the local transportation officer.

* * *

When my daughter's husband went into the service their landlord started giving her trouble. Rent was due the first of the month, allotment was late, and my daughter could not pay the rent without disturbing an emergency fund. On the 3d she received notice to vacate within three days or court action would be taken. She will have to get an attorney. She has a four-year-old girl and a baby, and has found no house to which they can move.

Mrs. M. S. McK., Galveston, Tex.

I suggest that you get in touch with the American Bar Association in the county in which you reside. They and the Legal Aid Society, 11 Park Place, New York City, furnish free legal assistance to servicemen and their dependents.

* * *

My husband is missing in action. What will become of the Christmas packages that were sent to him? Could the boys stationed where he was, boys whom we both know, get those packages for themselves?

Mrs. J. P. B., Willow Springs, Mo.

Ordinarily, mail which cannot be delivered to the addressee is returned to the sender. However, you could write the Commanding Officer at your husband's last address and ask to have Christmas packages from you distributed to the other men in the unit.

* * *

Sarge, will you please tell me in what way I can go about sending my husband a cablegram when our baby arrives? My husband is in Corsica with the Air Force

Mrs. F. B., Frisco City, Ala.

If there are cable facilities where your hu band is located you can cable him direct abou the birth of your child. Your local telegrap office will give you this information.

* * *

Am writing to you in the hope that I may be able to get the straight dope o furloughs before going overseas. If a man i going over does it matter if he has bee in the Army only four or five months?

Pvt. R. K., Fort Sam Houston, Tex.

By cable

The War Department Circular on pre-em barkation furloughs states that if at all possi ble a soldier should be granted a furlough prior to being sent overseas if he has not ha a furlough granted in the previous six months

* * *

A couple of weeks ago we were told that the time we are in active cadet training in the Army Air Corps is "dead" time as regards getting schooling benefits from the G. I. Bill of Rights. Is that correct?

A/C G. D. A., Moore Field, Tex.

Yes, that's correct. To receive these benefits you must have served ninety days or more not counting time as a cadet or a midshipman or in Army Specialized Training Program o Navy College Training Program.

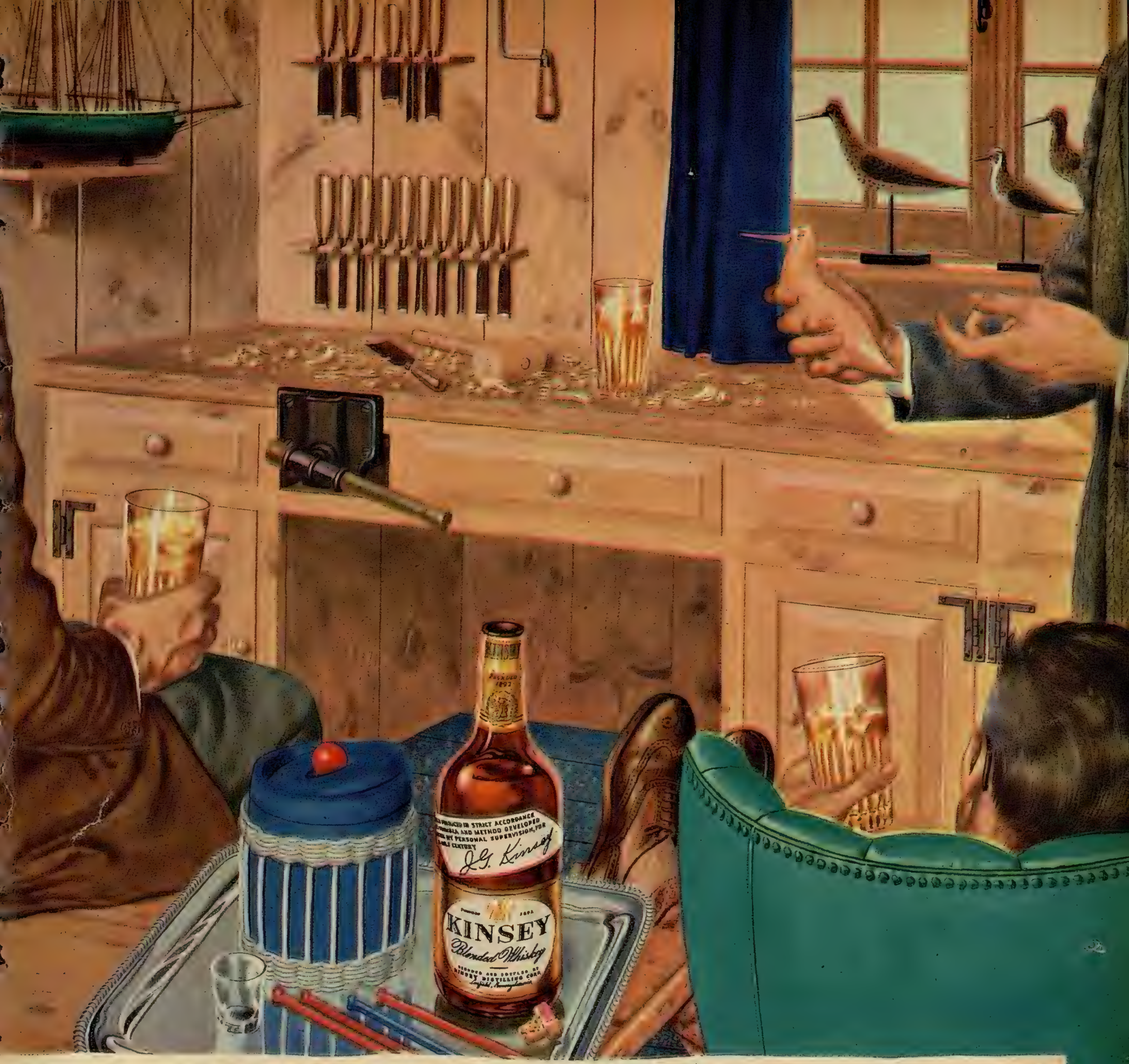
* * *

Will you please tell me why some Purple Hearts have three stars and two clusters of leaves, while others have plain gold borders around the edge?

Mrs. E. D., Reading, Pa.

A cluster on a Purple Heart is in lieu of second award of that decoration.

This department of Liberty is for the men and women of the armed forces of the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard also their families and friends. The identity of letter writers will not be disclosed without their permission. Address your letters to: "Old Sarge," c/o Liberty, 205 East 42d St., New York 17, N. Y.



We get the nicest complaints!

We never heard of Ken Johnston until he sent us a complaint. And now he's one of our favorite people.

Here's the story, in Ken's own words:

"My workshop has always been a favorite hangout for the boys. But recently, they've taken to coming more often, and staying longer.

"Maybe it's coincidence, but this happened at just about the same time as I started to make my drinks with your perfectly grand-tasting Kinsey whiskey.

"Don't get me wrong—it's a pleasure to serve my friends with such a smooth and satisfying whiskey. But now I'll always wonder—is it me or my Kinsey they love?"

Well, folks, that's the story. If *you* start serving rich, mellow Kinsey (remember, 52 years of "know-how" goes into every bottle!) *you'll* probably become a more popular host, too.

Don't say we didn't warn you!

For Unhurried Moments
KINSEY
The Unhurried Whiskey

A Blended Whiskey • 86.8 Proof. 65% Grain Neutral Spirits • Kinsey Distilling Corporation, Linfield, Pa.

WHOSE BOOM?

Continued from Page 18

And how have the great bulk of us, who work for wages and salaries, fared? In 1939, wages and salaries were 44.2 billion dollars. For 1944 the figure was about 110 billion—an increase of 150 per cent.

This means that wage earners have made greater relative gains than any other group, except farmers. Of the 87 billion dollars our national income has risen over 1939, 66 billion dollars is going into pockets of wage and salary earners. That is three quarters of the increase.

FIVE years ago wage earners were receiving 62 per cent of the national income, now they receive 70 per cent.

Let's understand right away that in terms of individual prosperity, of dollars to spend, this is a little less splendid than it sounds. The jumped cost of living takes the top cream off this gain. (Compare your current grocery bill with what it was in 1939.) The money is being divided among more people than it was in 1939. The big executive who draws $50,000 or more a year is counted in this figure, as well as the riveter and the clerk. Taxes are cutting deeply into the gain, too.

And perhaps we should take a moment out to remember the millions of workers whose frozen salaries have climbed more slowly than the cost of living.

Still, it is a magnificent increase and the evidence of its reality is always at hand. It shows up in tailored slacks and fur coats and skyrocketing enrollments of expensive colleges for girls; in night-club profits and standing-room-only signs and auction prices on secondhand furniture and home workshop equipment. You can find its tracks in mail-order catalogues (diamond rings at $3,800 and wrist watches at $860).

You'll find it, too, in government statistics on cash in circulation. In 1929, called a boom year, there was something less than $40 in circulation for each person in the country. In 1944 we had $160.

So some of the increased income of wage earners is being carried around in pockets. A lot of it is being spent to pay for the high cost of living (and taxes), and some of it, as we have seen, is going into the cost of high living.

But not all of it is being spent, and to this simple fact we owe our present freedom from ruinous runaway inflation. These same unspent dollars may help us to keep our good economic times after the war, to save them for returning servicemen to share.

Americans saved 37 billion dollars in 1943, and probably added a similar amount in 1944. We, the people, now have 130 billion dollars tucked away, in one form or another. You can get some grasp of what this figure means from the fact that it is almost twice the amount we spent on goods and services in all of 1940.

How many people are taking part in this gigantic saving program? Who are they?

When the Chamber of Commerce of the United States asked a sample of families if they were saving money, 61 per cent said yes. A little further investigation showed that actually 84 per cent were doing so. Many did not recognize war-bond purchases and insurance and mortgage payments as saving.

Families living in large cities were more likely to be saving than those in smaller cities. And rural and small-town people were saving most of all. Younger people were saving more often than older, and the Far West was well ahead of the East.

More than one third of this phenomenal saved-up 130 billion dollars is in bank deposits and cash. It is carried around in wallets, slipped between pages of the family Bible, or buried in the back yard.

Something like one fourth of the money we're saving is in forms not always recognized as savings. But insurance is savings, building-and-loan deposits are savings, payment of debt is savings. Farmers especially have done a good deal of their saving by paying off debt; and many mortgages on homes have been sharply reduced or entirely paid off. Until the last year or so, installment debts were being cut down at a great rate, and that is saving, too. Not so much money is going into them now, for the excellent reason that the Great American Debt of installments owed has already been cut to negligible size.

The final 35 to 40 per cent of savings is in the form of government bonds, 25½ billion dollars being in bonds of the E series alone. That's a dry-sounding figure perhaps, but take another look at it. It is without precedent, any time, any place.

Eighty-one million people now own government bonds. Soldiers hold 500 million dollars' worth of bonds, bought through the War Department, and are adding to these savings at the rate of 40 million dollars a month.

Last summer the Treasury Department sponsored a survey to find out just who has these war savings bonds. Wage earners making less than $25 a week had bought almost none. Among people drawing wages of $26 to $45, the median family (that is the family halfway up in savings) owned $169 worth. In the group earning $46 to $65, the middle man held $375 worth of bonds. And the median for the $66-to-$100-a-week earners was $638.

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

"Bachelors know more about women than married men. If they didn't they'd be married, too."

—H. L. Mencken.

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

The end of the war will therefore find Americans in a position no great group has ever enjoyed before. For each person in the country there will be savings of about $1,000. Some will have more, of course, some will have less, and some will have none. (Keep remembering not all this is in directly spendable form. Some is in freedom from debt.)

So that famous mythical household, the "average family," will have a couple of thousand dollars in liquid savings when the war ends and will be much freer of debt than before.

What will it do with the money?

This depends in part on the answer to another question. Will we have a postwar depression in which these magnificent savings will be whittled away to pay the rent and buy the groceries, or will we slide with reasonable smoothness into a peacetime prosperity in which the money will be spent for the things bond buyers and savings-account depositors had in mind?

Probably the most scientific prediction we can get on that is from the Brookings Institution's study of what has happened after the other wars in American history. Following 1918, for instance, there was a year of business boom before an eighteen-month depression came along. Altogether, of those first eleven years after that war, only eighteen months were months of collapse.

If history repeats itself we can look forward to about six months of mild business recession right after the end of the war. Next would come rapid recovery marked by rising prices and industrial expansion. After a year or so of this boom, during which shortage-born demands would be filled and equipment would be replaced, there would be a collapse of prices and an acute but brief depression—followed by a long period of prosperity.

It is a question whether we as a nation have grown enough smarter to avoid a depression this time. But the great bulk of national savings is something which has never existed before; and it is one of several factors which may help us avoid even a short depression.

From this we can guess that not too much of our stored-up purchasing power will be used to tide us over periods of unemployment. Then what will the people with this unprecedented 130 billion dollars (and it is still growing) spend it on?

It happens that we have some pretty good clues to this puzzle. In a survey made last year, the U. S. Chamber of Commerce found that nearly two thirds of all families plan to make at least one major purchase within six months after the return of peace. (These are merely intentions, of course, and have no relation to what will actually be available.) Three and one half million people plan to buy a new car—which adds up to perhaps 3⅓ billion dollars. One and a half million families will buy or build a new home to the tune of more than 7 billion dollars. And this takes no account of those who are daily being added to the list and those who will suddenly discover need of a new home as they see a boom grow.

Household appliances to the value o 860 million dollars will be in demand in the first six months of peace. Interest seems to be growing most rapidly in radios and electric mixers.

Since all this takes account only of purchases already definitely planned, these figures are very likely to turn out to be wild underestimates. A life-insurance company asked a list of its policyholders, "What major purchases do you expect to make when the war is over—say within the first year after the removal of wartime restrictions?"

The replies indicated that no fewer than half the 25,000 families polled would buy an automobile; one third a new home; 30 per cent a new radio; 28 per cent would take an extensive trip; and 23 per cent would purchase a new refrigerator.

WHEN Fortune magazine asked people what one or two things they would most like to buy as soon as peace comes, it found a startling potential demand: 7,400,000 cars; 4,700,000 new homes; and so on for a total damned-up demand of more than 28 billion dollars.

So there you have the outlines of something the world has never seen before. Th American people have more than doubled their national income in the last five years. They have saved, in cash and bonds and freedom from debt, an amount greater than the national income in the best of the prewar years. Although some individuals and some business enterprises have suffered, all the great economic groups have shared in prosperity, with wage and salary earners receiving the bulk of the increased income.

Despite all the wild tales of reckless spending, the people of the United States have shown unexpected thrift, and their plans for future spending are tied to a desire for better living. The great bulk of savings will go into the solid things of life: freedom of movement which an automobile brings; comfort and efficiency o better homes and equipment; education for a coming generation.

It will be a hard blow for the pessimist. But for the rest of us it should be something well worth being in on.

THE END

THE SILENT WAR ON RADIO SPIES

Continued from Page 30

enemy fleet. The armed forces needed to know the answers quickly.

Sterling went into action. What the services wanted him to find out specifically was where every enemy transmitter was located, plus any information that could be combed out of the ether on the whereabouts of the Jap fleet.

He sent thirty-four additional men and equipment to Portland, Oregon, Los Angeles, and San Francisco to monitor Jap short-wave stations. Those experts helped to set up the most intensive radio direction-finding search ever conducted in this country. They swept the West Coast from Canada to Mexico and out into the far Pacific.

The result was a complete answer to both questions asked by the Army and Navy. Not a single Jap radio station was operating from our shores, and the Jap fleet, jabbering away in kana code to the Marshall Islands, was hurrying back to its lair.

Even then, with the country at war only a few days, the Radio Intelligence Division was fully prepared for its wartime job. A network of 102 listening stations and 12 stationary direction finders was operating in strategic locations. In addition, 92 mobile direction finders mounted in sedans were ready to track down the exact location of any clandestine transmitter, no matter how cleverly hidden.

Radio Intelligence men do their job by "patrolling" or "cruising" the air waves. This means listening in on thousands of stations all over the radio band. Most transmitters can be identified at once as non-spy stations merely by a check of the call letters, frequencies, operating procedures, by analysis of the type of traffic, or by other means known to Radio Intelligence operatives.

When a station is picked up which can't be thus identified as legal, the direction-finding network is alerted. Through a supersensitive apparatus called the Adcock direction finder, bearings are taken on the suspicious station at widely separated points. These bearings are swiftly co-ordinated and evaluated in Washington or San Francisco. Lines plotted on a map quickly show, by triangulation, the approximate location of the suspicious station. If the exact location is needed, the mobile direction finders are quickly dispatched to search it out.

WHEN a clandestine station is in a large building, experts can patrol the halls with hand detectors—"snifters"—which lead them straight to the room in which the spy is tapping out code.

Another device in the Radio Intelligence arsenal is the "watchdog" receiver. This ingenious detector warns the agent when a station under surveillance begins operations anywhere on the radio band. Thus it's unnecessary for the boys even to tune in on the station or worry about whether it may switch to a different frequency in an effort to escape detection.

Still another safeguard is the private-line teletypewriter and radio system which links all the listening stations so the entire network can be thrown into a single search if necessary.

Never in history has espionage been better planned or more widespread than in the present war. The Germans alone spent millions to set up a world-wide network. Developments in long-distance radio put an extremely dangerous weapon in the enemy's hands. They gave spies a means of almost instantaneous communication never before available for long-distance operations in a full-dress war. It was a means for the enemy not only to receive vital information but to direct sabotage operations as well.

Hitler and Hirohito wanted to know about cargo-ship arrivals and departures, about British and American warship movements. They wanted data on the weather and on imports and exports, armaments, movements of airplanes, formation of convoys, construction of naval installations. One isolated fact could be the key to the destruction of a convoy or the sinking of a transport at a cost of thousands of lives.

Fortunately, Uncle Sam farsightedly determined to beat them at their radio-intelligence game. The day before Hitler entered Paris, FCC sent a memo to the President's desk. It requested authority to expand for "current national defense and potential war purposes." Ten days later it had the $1,600,000 needed for the job. Within three months equipment had been obtained, experts were rounded up, and the war on radio spies had begun in earnest.

Within a short time Radio Intelligence operatives were regularly intercepting spy messages and tracking down espionage stations. Many were discovered to be regularly transmitting vital information to the German High Command.

Here are a few messages picked up by Radio Intelligence in the early days:

TO THE PIANO, MEN!

Whatever became of Mairzy Doats?
Were the authors strung up hi-de?
And isn't it time for one on goats
Since the little lamsay di-de?
—Bud Cornish.

This one, dealing with plane movements, was short-waved to Germany by a spy on July 5, 1941: "Nine Boeing [planes] flew with mixed crew consisting of Englishmen and Americans. Within the next few weeks, 20 are to be flown across. Details follow."

Germany messaged South American agents July 18, 1941: "There is possibility of airplanes for new army of Wavell, important Persian ports, as well as Basra. Organize via your man ship information service; that is, name, cargo, date of arrival, departure from port. Information on material . . . ports. I desire . . . organization of troops . . . to Afghanistan, Iran, and Iraq as soon as possible, with data on number of men."

From spies in South America on October 8, 1941, went this radio message to Germany: "BNM reports here that in Port of Spain several hundred U. S. aircraft and 8,000 special troops, allegedly landing corps, being assembled."

The extremes to which Axis agents were prepared to go are revealed in this message sent by a spy in Latin America to Germany on May 12, 1941: "Otis has a diver, Walter Friewald, born in Paraguay, father, Königsberg, who knows exactly the bottom of the harbor of the port of Buenos Aires. With channel depth of 30 feet, ships of from 24 to 27 feet of draft [can pass]. He is willing to place explosives in the ships. Explosion time [can be] set for a certain number of days. Diver is ready to go there for purpose of experimenting. . . . We should like your exact opinion before we go ahead with this matter. We believe the plan can be carried out even if it is difficult. . . ."

In response to Germany's requests for data on new-type planes, agents sent the following early in 1942: "Curtiss Columbus [Ohio] factory will begin mass production series SB2C single-seater Stuka for Navy. Armament one cannon, five machine guns, motor 1,700-horsepower Wright. Built for 2,000-horsepower Wright in experimental stage.

"Production of SO3C begun in Columbus factory at the beginning of December. Employees of all Curtiss aircraft factories in December total 27,000. Propeller production, November, 1,042."

In Radio Intelligence Division files are thousands of other intercepted messages. Spies who sent them are now safely behind bars.

The earliest clue to the first big Nazi spy case was turned up in March, 1942. Arthur Johnson, monitoring officer in charge at the listening station at Arcata, California, was casually twisting the radio dial in his daily search through the ether.

Suddenly he hit the jack pot on 14012 kilocycles, just inside the amateur band. He had previously logged hundreds of stations all over the world on this frequency. All had been legitimate, licensed stations. This time a fat Nazi spy ring was in the net.

Over and over Johnson heard the call letters PYL. To him, those signals meant one thing: A suspicious transmitter with the call letters PYL was seeking to establish contact with another station.

A FEW minutes later Abe Checkoway, now an ensign in the Coast Guard, then a Radio Intelligence operator at Millis, Massachusetts, picked up a second suspicious station. This station was attempting to mask its signals by transmitting in the transatlantic telephone frequency. It transmitted the call letters REW for five minutes, lapsed into a five-minute silence, and resumed again at five-minute intervals in the same fashion as had station PYL.

As reports on the two stations came into the Eastern Intelligence center at Washington, Al McIntosh, chief of the intercept section, opened his eyes wide. He saw that the five-minute on and off times of the two stations jibed. He surmised at once they must be attempting to establish contact. Their very precision and clocklike regularity helped betray them as Nazi stations.

A direction-finding search quickly located PYL near Valparaiso, Chile, and REW near Hamburg, Germany. Fifteen monitoring stations immediately were assigned to keep a daily watch on the two and intercept all their messages.

Because of the low power on which PYL operated, monitoring it was a tough job. Only the most experienced operator could lick it. The transmitter's strength was so weak, in fact, that several weeks passed before the Valparaiso station succeeded in establishing contact with Germany. After contact was established, Radio Intelligence agents copied every word of the nearly 1,000 messages that flashed between the spy ring's transmitter and the mother station in Germany.

This Valparaiso station acted as a radio clearinghouse for Axis agents operating in Chile, Argentina, Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, and the United States. It was set up under the supervision of Friedrich von Schultz-Hausmann von Szimonsky. This spy boss was then a North German Lloyd Line official in Chile. Later he headed up radio spy activity in Argentina.

Discovery of the spy transmitter in Chile was immediately reported to the State Department and the F. B. I. After long months of negotiations, the State Department finally obtained permission from the Chilean government to have Radio Intelligence agents make an on-the-spot search.

(*Continued on page 68*)

HARDTACK

BESSIE ARBRUSTER PLUGS A CHAIN-GUNGER

Continued from Page 29

Bessie thanked Jake, promised to return to fish with him, and then pedaled back to Miami. She had supper at a little cafe on the bay front. Of the manager she inquired about the movements of the shrimp fleet and, having found out what she wanted, paid him, lustily smacked his back, and invited him to Barkentine Island to fish.

She returned the bicycle and proceeded to walk back to the water front. Night came so swiftly that Bessie was baffled and muttered something about "funny foreign doin's."

As she passed a juke joint, Bessie stopped briefly to listen to a radio announcer chatter about the latest developments in the Duval kidnaping case. Dr. Duval had refused to confirm the kidnaping, but a newspaper reporter had heard Mrs. Duval hysterically shriek something about twenty-five thousand dollars' ransom.

BESSIE plodded wearily but determinedly past some warehouses and out onto a long weather-beaten dock.

With narrowed eyes and pursed lips she carefully studied a small fleet of squat, top-heavy shrimpers rocking gently in their watery nests and secured to the dock. They all appeared to be deserted.

"Hah!" said Bessie triumphantly.

At the extreme end of the dock bobbed a dilapidated trawler on whose bow were the faded letters "Susan Ann." But what interested Bessie was the port bow. Just below the rail it was caved in. A dirty piece of canvas had been nailed over the gaping hole about a foot and a half above the water line.

Bessie glanced around quickly. The dock was deserted. She shuffled carefully to the edge, waited for a wave to hoist the bow of the trawler, and then, with an elephantine but effective leap, boarded her.

She spent the next half an hour inspecting the shrimper from stem to stern, and when she prepared to quit the boat her lips were fixed in a grim smile.

She jumped, hit the dock with a thud, and before she could regain her equilibrium a heavy hand was on her shoulder and the rays from a flashlight were blinding her.

"Wull-wull—if it ain't a woman me name ain't Fogarty." The speaker sounded vastly surprised.

Bessie knocked the hand off her shoulder. "What wus ye expectin', a flying barry-cuda?" she snapped.

The flashlight rays reflected on a shining badge which adorned Fogarty's gray shirt. He wore blue uniform trousers, was at least six feet tall, brawny and alert.

"Move ahead," he ordered, "and no shenanigans. Lively now."

Bessie did some rapid thinking.

"So it's Fogarty, hey?" she asked cheerfully over her shoulder. "Be ye any relation to Eddie Fogarty what runs a tavern offn Beach Haven up Jersey way?"

"Nope," was the curt retort. "An' what was you up to aboard the Susan Ann?"

Bessie shrugged her shoulders. "I been thinkin'," she said honestly, "o' takin' a interest in a shrimper. I'm in the fishin' business."

They neared the dock entrance.

"You know Reds Kline and Barney Robideux?"

"You mean them as owns the Susan Ann?" said Bessie, cautiously.

"I'm askin' the questions," snapped Fogarty. "But niver mind. It's the jedge you'll be telling it to. Lively now."

Bessie sighed. She glanced over the edge of the dock. The water was only about two feet deep, but the mud was black.

She looked over her shoulder and briefly studied Officer Fogarty's bronzed face, which was barely illumined by a distant street light. She sighed again. He was a handsome brute. Then Bessie stumbled.

"Oops!" she said. "Me shoelace."

She stooped, grunted, then straightened.

"Reckon I'll haf to find me a bench," she remarked.

Fogarty held the flashlight close to her face and studied it suspiciously. Honesty, humility, and good nature were written all over Bessie's broad features.

"Here, hold this," he said, shoving the flashlight into her hands. He stooped and groped for the loose lace.

"A-one, a-two, an' a heave . . ." Bessie muttered.

"What's that?" Fogarty asked sharply.

"An' a ho!" Bessie shouted, grabbing Fogarty firmly around the midriff and heaving. He hit the water with a resounding *kerplunk* and sank to his waist in mud.

"I'm truthfully sorry," sang Bessie, "an' here's yer 'lectric light, Mister Fogarty."

She tossed it at him, and simultaneously two streaks of flame darted from the water and Bessie heard two bullets whine a few feet above her head. Her footsteps beat a staccato tattoo on the warped pier boards.

Bessie ran until her heart was pounding and her breath was coming in wheezes. Finally she sank down exhausted on a bench in what appeared to be a water-front park.

For perhaps five minutes Bessie sat there, breathing noisily, and cogitated, but was unable to chart a clear course. Then her eyes flickered as they focused on a distant neon sign hanging in front of a dilapidated water-front tavern.

"Time out, Arbruster, fer some cheese 'n' crackers and mebbe a glass o' light ale."

DOC HARRISON awoke with a start and looked at his watch. It was nearly three o'clock in the morning. Then he realized what was worrying him. He had been trying to locate Bessie ever since three o'clock in the afternoon. Doc jiggled the phone by the bed.

"Any word from Miss Arbruster?" he inquired of the night clerk.

An ominous silence. Then: "Yes, suh. Miss Arbruster telephoned, suh. I didn't wish to disturb you."

"Anything wrong?" Doc inquired.

"Well—no, suh." The clerk coughed. "She—ah—wanted to know the time, and then she asked me if—ah—if a tarpon was faster than a striped bass. She—'hem—said it was a matter of a—a few bucks."

Doc's jaw dropped.

"Where is she?" he snapped.

"She mentioned a place called Snug Harbor, suh. Said for me not to disturb you."

Doc took a deep breath.

"Where is this Snug Harbor?"

The clerk coughed again. "It—it's a place on the water front. I—I'm afraid we cannot recommend it, suh. It is even off bounds to servicemen."

"Damn it!" shouted Doc. "Get me a cab."

Ten minutes later the cab rolled up in front of the most sinister-looking div Doc had ever seen—and he liked to brag about his slumming expeditions.

The warped shutters were hanging at crazy angles, the solid stone doorstep was tilted drunkenly, and the swinging doors were battered and creaky. Its only identification was a small, horribly incongruous neon sign hanging over the door. It flickered with lascivious portent the letters "NUG HAR OR."

Doc paid the cabbie, who winked and said, "Take it easy, bub." Doc withered him with a glance. He took a deep breath, pushed open the swinging doors. The place reeked of gin, sin, and stale beer. A juke box was noisily rasping a tune about Somebody Getting By As Long As They Had Somebody Else. A quintet of bleary-eyed mariners was rolling for drinks at a rum-mottled imitation-mahogany bar.

Doc looked around sharply. The pock-peppered bartender studied Doc fishily.

"Yeah, bub," he growled.

"Lookin' for a friend," replied Doc. "A large woman."

The bartender motioned toward a shadowy rear room which had been divided into alcoves containing tables and benches.

"Try back there," said the bartender, leering. "Take your choice, chum."

Dirty canvas curtains were drawn in front of the alcoves and from behind came a weird cacophony: giggles, whispers, curses, glasses clinking, dice rolling, and suddenly—above all—a hearty, salty, unmistakable laugh.

"Cripes!" came a voice. "That's a good 'un, Reds. Now didja ever hear the one 'bout the . . ."

Doc yanked back the curtain. Six startled eyes met his—those of Bessie and of two unkempt, unsteady, hard-bitten hombres.

"Good Guppie!" Bessie set down her glass with a crash. "You shoulda stood in bed."

Doc stood there, hands on his hips.

"Well?" he asked sourly.

"Siddown," Bessie ordered. "I want you should meet Reds and Barney. Coupla shrimpers. Jest happenstances I bumped into 'em. Have a drink, Doc. Hunerd-an'-fifty-proof rum. Jest scraped offn the boat."

A quart bottle parked in front of Bessie was nearly empty. For an electric moment Doc just stared at Bessie.

"I've been looking for you," Doc said coldly. "I wanted to inform you about the latest developments in the kidn—"

"Shuddup!" roared Bessie. "I don't care how the kid is. G'wan home."

Doc hesitated.

"You coming with me?" he asked.

The man named Reds lurched to his feet. He sized up Doc with red-rimmed orbs.

"Shall I t'row him out, Bess?" he inquired, thickly. "T'row him out, 'r just slip one atween his ribs, quiet like?"

Bessie stood up, hands on hips.

"Siddown!" she roared at Reds. Startled, he slumped back into his seat and raised his drink. Bessie turned to Doc. She raised a thumb hitchhiker style, and without batting an eyelash said sharply,

"Haul anchor, bo. Hit the rip. In udder words, lemme see yer wake afore I fergit I'm a leddy."

Doc started to say something, then snapped his mouth shut.

"Well?" asked Bessie belligerently.

Doc turned red, then pale. He hauled the curtain back across the alcove. As he walked away he heard Bessie saying,

"Now jist where is this spot, Reds, where you kin ketch all them big tarpon?" . . .

As Doc got his room key from the night clerk he said grimly:

"If your warmest friend of seventeen long years suddenly let you completely down, what would you do?"

"The cocktail lounge is on the floor below, suh," the clerk said.

DOC awoke with a start and switched on the bed lamp. His alarm clock showed it was nearly five o'clock in the morning. His head throbbed and his mouth was dry. He had followed the night clerk's directions. Rain was swooshing down past the hotel window and clattering noisily on palm fronds. Then he heard a resounding thump on the door.

Hastily Doc swallowed a mouthful of water and headed for the door, grabbing a robe en route. He opened it cautiously. Bessie burst in like a catboat in the teeth of a sou'wester. Her shoes squished, and her dress was a sodden sack.

Doc switched on the overheads. "Well!" he breathed, speaking volumes.

"I got me a hunch," said Bessie breathlessly, "jest couldn't wait 'til mornin'."

Doc studied her sternly.

"Seems to me you were getting more than a hunch when I last cast my painful shadow on your tilted doorstep."

Bessie sighed impatiently.

"I was jest buyin' the boys a couple o' drinks," she said. "A woman's gotta fling a oat er two onct in awhile."

"You certainly hold yours well," said Doc, and his lips were a thin line.

Bessie blew a strand of wayward hair out of her eyes and water sprayed on Doc. Matter-of-factly she said,

"Oh, I wuz pourin' mine into that big tree pot. Lissen, Doc—I kin explain later. You got a map o' Floriddy?"

Doc sighed. Lines of relaxation and good humor were reappearing in his face.

"At five o'clock in the morning," he muttered, "the woman invades my private room and wants a map. Bessie, you should be in a sanitarium—not in Miami."

"A map o' Floriddy wid all the little doohickeys on it," Bessie persisted.

Doc blinked. "Doo-hickeys?"

"Like them geodetic survey maps I help to make up in Jersey. Shows all the little hills 'n' valleys 'n' inlets 'n' outlets."

Doc rustled through his grip. He handed Bessie a map. She stretched it out on the rug, sat down with a terrific bump, and proceeded to study it.

"This ain't very good but it helps," Bessie mumbled. "H'mmm. Cape Sable—Flamingo—an' here's a little inlet goes into sort of a lake. Right down near the tip end o' Floriddy. Mebbe—hum. . . Yep! Thar's buoy marker number seven."

Doc yawned and looked unhappily at his bed.

"I hate to be impolite," he said, wearily, "but almost any minute the management is liable to send up a man with a cigar and a derby hat. Don't you think you should retire to your own boudoir?"

Bessie's eyebrows were knitted and her lips were pursed.

"What," she asked Doc thoughtfully, "is a chain-gunger?"

Doc was loading his large-bowled pipe. He almost dropped it.

"A—a which?"

"A chain-gunger. That feller Reds—when he wuz in his cups—said somepin 'bout bein' a fusilage from a chain-gung."

Doc roared spontaneously, and then held his head.

"Oh Lord, Bessie!" he exclaimed. "You mean a fugitive from a chain-gang. Down here they take the worst convicts and chain them together. Call them chain-gangs. They consist mostly of life termers—murderers and such."

Bessie's mouth hung open for a minute.

"Doc," she said, and he could see she was in deadly earnest, "I jest gotta get me a boat wid an outboard motor. I gotta git me down't Everglades near Lost Lake. Kin you help me?"

Doc studied her suspiciously.

"What cooks, Bessie?" he asked gruffly.

"Big tarpon run on. I aims to ketch one to hang over the bar back in Jersey."

"There's more than tarpon behind this, Bess," Doc said wisely, "but I know better than to be stubborn about things where you are concerned. I think I know a fellow who can help us out."

For several minutes Doc studied the names in a telephone book. Then he jiggled the receiver and gave the operator a number. There was a long wait. Then. . .

"Hello, Frank? Well, well. Long time no hear. This is Doc Harrison. That's right, from Barkentine, New Jersey. Hah! Same to you, you old son of a gun. What's that? You're only operating on Sundays now? Well—that's a break for us. Save us a good boat and a good motor. How about guiding us? . . . Fine. . . . See you in about an hour and a half."

"Bessie," Doc said beaming, "we've got one of the best fishermen in the Glades for a guide. He's an old friend of mine. Used to run a fishing camp in Delaware. It's about an hour's run from here—down on the Glades trail. We'll hire a car."

Bessie beamed right back.

"Sometimes, Doc," she said, "you make me feel downright sedimental. I'll go change me duds and see ye in the lobby in fifteen minutes."

OVER Biscayne Bay a kaleidoscopic dawn was breaking as Doc and Bessie headed toward Homestead and points southwest. Doc snapped on the radio just in time to get the tail end of a local news broadcast.

". . . This unidentified woman," the announcer said swiftly, "pushed a policeman off the pier after he discovered her prowling near the shrimp boats. A state-wide

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search is under way. She is charged with being a suspicious character, disorderly conduct, resisting arrest, and assaulting an officer of the law. Her description follows . . ."

Bessie twirled the radio dial.

"Hey!" said Doc, annoyed. "Wait . . ."

"Shucks," said Bessie. "Less git some music. Sich a beautiful mornin' an' all."

Resignedly, Doc settled down to driving. They passed through Royal Palm Park and hit the sandy one-way trail toward Cape Sable. The road became narrower, the pines and skeleton cypress thicker, and the swamps darker and more sinister.

When they turned off the narrow sandy road into a tortuous passageway between tough palmettos, Doc drove fast in second gear so the wheels wouldn't bog down in the sand. They finally emerged on the edge of a wide subtropical lake. As Doc shut off the motor, two gorgeous flamingos flapped awkwardly skyward, their legs dangling like bamboo stilts.

At the lake shore a bronzed, barefooted figure, clad only in a pair of blue dungarees, was busily bailing out a boat.

Doc leaped out of the car, bounded toward him, and they pumped hands vigorously. The tall bronzed man, with his arm around Doc's shoulders, headed for the car.

". . . And she's the best fisherman in the world and my best friend," Doc was saying.

DOC'S friend extended a huge paw toward Bessie, grinning laconically. Bessie's eyes met his and her jaw dropped.

"Ah-h . . ." said Bessie, adding something that sounded like "Glop!"

"Wull-wull," said Doc's friend. "Sure, and surprising things do happen or my name ain't Fogarty. Fancy meeting you here."

"Cripes," said Bessie, "the copper."

"You two know each other?" inquired Doc.

"I been huntin' all over hell-and-gone for her," Fogarty said. "You have no idea how Miami wants her."

Doc squinted at both of them.

"Let's cut out this double talk," he ordered. "What goes on?"

Bessie took a deep breath.

"Why, me an' Frank kind o' met on a pier t'other night," she explained rapidly. "Had a little argiement. But I'm perfickly willin' t'let bygones be bygones fer the duration of a fishin' trip. What dya say, Frankie m'boy?"

Fogarty grinned and extended his hand.

"Why, sure," he agreed, "sure. Let's go catch tarpon, and then somebody's going to catch hell."

Five minutes later they were zooming across Lost Lake in Fogarty's twelve-foot fishing boat powered by a nine-horse kicker. The sun bore down with fury, and Fogarty opened a spacious fishing box. He extracted three pith helmets.

"Douse these with water and put 'em on," he ordered. "Whenever you feel yourself start to burn up, wet 'em again. You two gotta get hep to cracker fishing."

Far to starboard there was a sudden mysterious swirl in the black water.

"Tarpon," said Fogarty, pointing. "Want to try a few casts?"

Bessie shook her head.

"Take us down to buoy marker seven," she ordered.

Fogarty looked at her, surprised.

"Good tarpon spot," he admitted, "but dangerous water. Big whirlpool at the Inlet on tide changes. The Seminoles call it Ime-lo-la-tee-ti-ye, which means 'water rough.' They're scared of it."

The lake narrowed, became a fast flowing creek. A mile ahead they could see the smashing white breakers of the Inlet and the dazzling white sands of the beaches. Bessie stood up in the boat, shielded her eyes. Suddenly she muttered something.

"There's your marker number seven," said Doc, pointing ahead.

"Uh-huh," muttered Bessie. She glanced at Fogarty with narrowed eyes. "See that fishin' shack over in the woods? Head fer that. I got me a hunch."

Fogarty stared at her, puzzled.

"It's abandoned," he said. "What's the matter? Seasick?"

They put-putted toward the shack. It was almost concealed by coconut palms and cypress. A small dilapidated dock led from its porch to the turbulent creek.

"Lemme off at the dock," Bessie ordered. Fogarty guided the small craft to the dock.

"I wouldn't go in there," he said. "It's probably full of scorpions and rattlers."

"Shucks," said Bessie, "in Jersey we got copperheads 'n' water snakes."

She clambered ungracefully onto the rotting dock and walked cautiously but heavily over the teetering boards. They watched her rip open a recalcitrant screen door and enter the shack.

"Now what do you suppose—" began Fogarty.

Doc shook his head wearily.

"Don't ever try to figure her out," he advised. "I've been trying for seventeen years. However, her basic motives are usually sound and . . . hey! What's this?"

Bessie was emerging. She had one brawny arm around the slim waist of a white-faced, pale-lipped lad whose eyes were large and haunted. On his wrists and ankles were red stripes and blisters.

"What the devil!" blurted Doc. "It looks like . . . it might . . ."

Bessie and the boy walked slowly down the dock.

"Bless your little heart," Bessie was saying tenderly. "I got a thermos jest full o' good cold orange juice fer ye. An' a nice liverwurst 'n' onion sandwich."

The boy licked his dry lips.

"You say you ain't et fer two days? Bless yer little heart an' soul. Bessie'll take care o' ye. Now dontcha worry."

She lifted him gently into the boat.

"'Member young Al Duval, Doc?" she asked. "This is him. Reds 'n' Barney wuz holdin' him fer ransom. I got me a hunch. They talked about their shack near marker seven whin they wuz in their cups."

Doc and Fogarty exchanged glances.

"Well—Lord bless her!" said Fogarty.

HE started the motor. Bessie was pouring orange juice into the Duval boy, between bites of liverwurst sandwiches.

"Al," asked Bessie as they sped into the racing creek waters, "have you got a fishin' rod wid a silver grip on't?"

Al nodded. His cheeks were bulging.

"Pop gave it to me for my birthday."

"Got yer initials on't—A. D.—ain't it?"

Al gulped, nodded, and took another bite.

"I knew it," said Bessie. "Whin I wuz aboard the Susan Ann I seen this rod in the cabin. I knew no shrimpers cud afford rods like that."

Fogarty's head suddenly snapped up.

"Oh-oh," he said. "Comes headaches."

Speeding up the creek and headed directly for their rowboat came a dirty, barnacled shrimp trawler. Her port bow was stove in. In the bow stood a man with brilliant red hair, and in his hands was a shotgun. As it overtook them, Fogarty guided their little craft to the beach. Reds Kline cut motor, dropped anchor. He and Barney glared down at them from the deck of the Susan Ann.

"Pretty smart, huh?" growled Reds, aiming the gun at Bessie. "You git us drunk, then double-cross us. Dames like you I shoot right between the eyes. And wid pleasure." They could see his finger tighten on the trigger and Bessie spread herself over young Al like a mother hen.

"Hand dat kid up here," Barney ordered roughly. "He's worth dough. We'll deal wid youse guys later."

Bessie straightened up, pointed astern. "Look!" she said excitedly. "Tarpon! A hunerd pounder, betcha!"

Reds, still keeping his gun trained on Bessie, glanced astern. He saw the water swirling, a white belly.

"Reds," pleaded Bessie, " 'member our argiement 'bout fast fish? Now we kin settle it an' mebbe I'll owe ye five bucks. I come all the way from Jersey to kitch me a tarpon for me barroom."

Barney said, "Don't do it, dope!"

"Look," Bessie pleaded, "jes lemme make one cast. Then you kin have the kid an' do what ye like wid us. Please, Reds."

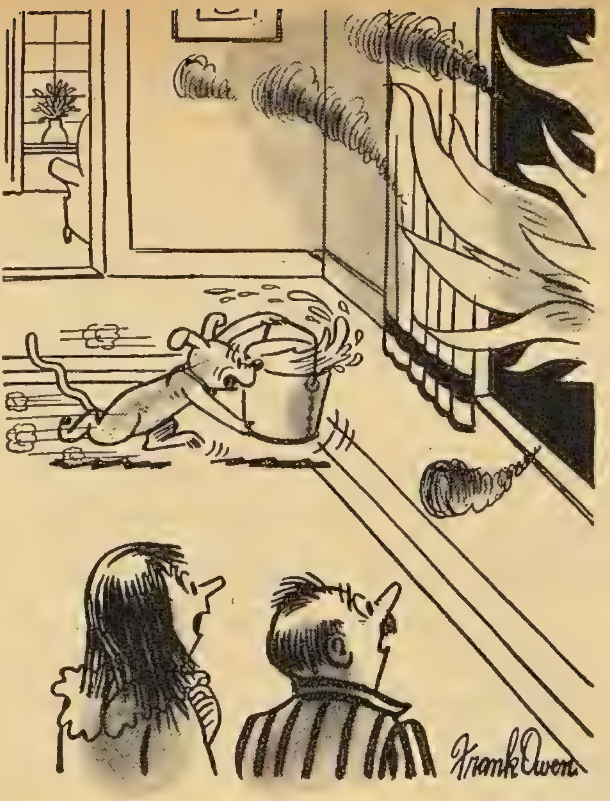
Reds studied Bessie suspiciously. But at heart he was a game fisherman, not a commercial shrimper.

"Go ahead," he growled. "Let's see if you're lyin' about your fishin'. Never yet saw a dame what could fish."

The shrimper drifted out into the current and its anchor rope pulled taut. Fifteen feet astern the water swirled again. Bessie's eyes became glued on the spot where the swirl had appeared.

She raised her limber steel rod, drew it back. The sparkling plug on the end of the line glittered. Its wicked-looking gang hooks shone brilliantly.

Deftly, professionally, Bessie snapped the rod forward. The plug whined, sailed high, performed a perfect arc. It veered sharply to starboard as Bessie twisted her wrist. The plug hit Reds just above the right ear, and simultaneously Bessie jerked hard. The hooks set.



"Most dogs would be content merely to bark a warning and let it go at that!"

"Aaa—roooo!" It was a combined scream and a howl. Reds toppled over the rail, blood gushing from his head. The gun hit the water first. Barney vainly tried to hold Reds' legs. As Reds plunged into the water, Barney, with a swift sweep, severed the anchor rope. The Susan Ann swung out into the channel, raced toward the Inlet in the teeth of a ten-mile tide.

Fogarty, probing with a boat hook, snagged Reds' trousers. They hauled him into the rowboat. He was unconscious.

"Look!" shouted Fogarty, pointing to the Inlet. "It's Im-e-lo-la-tee-ti-ye!"

Doc, Bessie, and Al looked, flabbergasted. The shrimp trawler was spinning like a berserk dervish. As it spun it sank. Green water, flecked with white foam, crept over her rail, into her galley.

They saw Barney mount the mast like a monkey. The Susan Ann dipped lower, lower, still whirling. They heard Barney scream. The mast plunged into the maelstrom, bobbed up once, vanished.

"Gad!" breathed Doc, awe-stricken.

"Let's go git him," said Bessie.

Fogarty shook his head.

"We can't do a thing until low tide. About then Lost Lake will spew up the Susan Ann to join the rest of the debris over there on the beach. Barney had it coming to him."

THE dinner at the Hotel Seminole was in honor of Bessie. Among those present were Dr. and Mrs. Duval, the hosts; young Al, Doc, Jake Massey, Frank Fogarty, an FBI man, and the head of the Miami Police Department.

Bessie and Doc and Fogarty and young Al faced a battery of cameramen, answered a thousand questions. Dr. Duval finally dismissed the press. He could see Bessie becoming more and more agitated.

"Bessie," he said, "I know you better than to offer you a reward. But I insist that you and Doc be my guests on my yacht next week. We'll cruise the gulf and fish and fish."

Bessie looked doubtfully at Doc.

"It'll do you good," insisted Dr. Duval. "Although, I must say, my examination this morning showed you are a hundred per cent improved. The barnacles are gone, the knock is out of the main bearing."

Doc Harrison glanced at Bessie's back.

"And you might say," he said dryly, "that her rudder is spreading."

Bessie took a firm grip on a tumbler of water. With one eye half closed and chin outthrust she said to Doc:

"Sometimes, Doc, your jokes have a odor like the Susan Ann."

THE END

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MAKERS OF SAMSONITE LUGGAGE, SAMSON CARD TABLES AND FOLDING CHAIRS

(Continued from page 63)

Red-haired John DeBardeleben, monitoring officer at Brownsville, Texas, was sent to Chile in the spring of 1942. Within a short time he had located Station PYL at the home of Guillermo Zeller in a suburb of Valparaiso.

DeBardeleben reported to his boss in Washington that a complete set of parts for a transmitter and two all-purpose receivers had been bought at the Casa Widow radio store just prior to the opening of the espionage station. The purchaser was Hans Blume, manager of Transradio Chilena, German commercial radio branch in Valparaiso.

When the spy ring learned that DeBardeleben had arrived, it began to stagger transmitting schedules. Members of the ring also built a wagon for the transmitte so they could move it from place to place. They vainly sought in that way to avoid detection.

On June 25, 1942, Chilean police raided the Zeller home. The receiver was nowhere to be found. A second raid was arranged after a tapped telephone revealed that Zeller had called another Nazi and had reported: "Luckily they did not searc very good, especially in the basement." The new raid also was unsuccessful. But police reported a crate was "noted" in the basement. The police, however, did not open it

AT the time Chile and Argentina were the only two countries in Latin America which still maintained relations with the Axis. It was evident from the indifferent attitude toward the radio espionage transmitter that Chile at that time wasn't too enthusiastic about a real crackdown on Nazi spies.

Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles knew all about the espionage activity from intercepts provided to the State Department. He had been striving through diplomatic channels to obtain action against the spies. Finally, in a speech on October 8, 1942, at a dinner of the National Foreign Trade Convention in Boston, Welles scored Argentina and Chile for allowing the Americas "to be stabbed in the back by Axis emissaries operating in the territory and under the free institutions of these two republics of the Western Hemisphere."

The speech brought results. Mass meetings throughout Chile demanded the resignation of Ernesto Barros Jarpa, Chile pro-Nazi Foreign Minister, and a break with the Axis. Twelve days after Welles speech Barros Jarpa and the entire Cabinet resigned. It was explained that this wa done to give President Juan Antonio Rio "absolute freedom of action to deal with the crisis."

Then, several days later, the Chilean government rounded up the Axis agen The Valparaiso transmitter, located by the Radio Intelligence Division a year and a half before, had finally been silenced.

Chile's dramatic espionage battles were duplicated in other Latin-American countries. In Brazil, spies operated transmitters for nearly a year until March, 1942. During all that time the Radio Intelligence Division intercepted their messages. The crackdown came after a short-wave message tipped off the German High Command that the Queen Mary had arrived in Rio with a load of 8,000 Canadian troops.

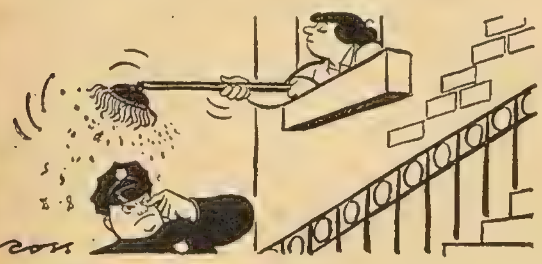
Throughout four years Uncle Sam's radi Hawkshaws have remained on the aler twenty-four hours a day to save America lives. Their painstaking, highly specialize operations have helped sterilize Axis rad operations within this hemisphere. Victor has been brought closer by their efforts. Until the enemy is crushed, you can be sure there'll be no let-up in their silen war against radio spies.

THE END

Woman-Talk

BY
MARGARET FISHBACK

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION: Mrs. Lillian Richland and Mrs. Sophie Kaye, both of the Bronx, New York, would doubtless agree that it's smart to give up mop-shaking out of windows for the new year. The two energetic housewives were fined five dollars each by Magistrate William Klapp in Bronx Magistrate's Court. Said Magistrate Klapp, "Mop-shaking is dangerous to public health and must cease. . . . I am deadly opposed to individuals who have no respect and consideration for others." He added that second offenders would be dealt with severely.

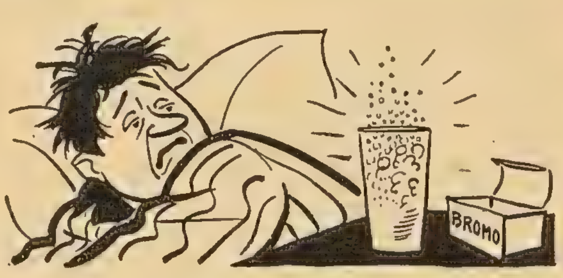


IN BRIEF: It's tantalizing to get the necessarily brief letters relayed by the Red Cross from prisoners of war; though they relieve a burdened heart temporarily, they leave frightening gaps. The prisoner says he is well and could use some shaving cream and chocolate and he hopes the family is fine. All the details as to the exact state of his health, weight, diet, occupation, and location must be left to that glorious day when he comes home to stay, and heaven knows how much he'll remember or want to remember. We probably shall never know much about the life he is living now. But though we hunger for details, there is a lesson we can learn from the brevity of his communications. It would be a fine thing if relatives living in different cities made up their minds to limit their letters for a time to twenty-five words so that they would be compelled to put in the essentials and omit the depressing details about the furnace which isn't doing right by them, and the window washer who hasn't shown up for two months, and the butcher who is holding out on bacon, and the cleaning woman who has left for a better job. What can the recipient of such literary gems do about the problems that torture the writer? In a word, nothing. So why in heaven's name weigh down the heavily burdened domestic post office with such ponderous bunches of sour gripes?

FULL OF PROMISE: Whenever I feel despair creeping into my life, I turn confidently to the newspaper advertisements, which continue to promise beauty, glamor, youth, love, and a new electric refrigerator any minute. Says one New York store in advertising its *Figurine Dress with Shepherdess Lacing:* "Nature gives a perfect figure only to a special few. Our Figurine gives one to everyone! Lattice of lacing, like the dress of a Dresden shepherdess, moulds a wonderful bosom." Another Gotham shop rhapsodizes: "You'll be wild with ecstasy in our silver fox jackets," while still another promises that "You'll be glad you have a daughter when you see these darling teen-age dresses." And in case you're both thirsty and depressed about your looks, you'll be glad to know that a cheery Fifth Avenue emporium vouches for the fact that "It takes 20 minutes to make a frozen daiquiri—it takes 10 minutes to look beautiful with ——Basic Treatment." Wives with husbands overseas may be a bit envious, but should still revel in another Fifth Avenue store's avowal that "Your husband delights you the year 'round by telling you you're the most wonderful woman in the world." That's why you're supposed to dazzle him with a gift of gold jewelry from that particular store.

GUMMING UP THE WORKS: The Army Quartermaster Depot in Chicago estimates that soldiers overseas are consuming more than 630 sticks of chewing gum per man per year. Fighting men are issued 600,000,000 sticks annually in parachute, life-raft, and K rations. Each soldier buys an average of forty more sticks a month from post exchanges, thus accounting for a yearly overseas total of about three billion sticks. Does that make it clear why you can't find your favorite gum on your favorite counters?

SPEAKING OF HANGOVERS: The British Medical Journal gives this prescription dealing with a hangover: "A bottle of Vichy water before retiring, a half-pint of cold water containing a teaspoonful of soda bicarbonate upon arising, a cold bath, and then breakfast, no matter how revolting it may appear." The Journal also advises the sufferer, whose thirst is stronger than his wits, to take a small dose of the "hair of the dog," unless about to fly a plane or drive a car. . . . Five hundred members of Alcoholics Anonymous recently celebrated the tenth anniversary of the founding of their organization. None of their 12,000 members needs a cure for hangover, because of having conquered the drinking habit, which they regard as a disease. At their anniversary dinner, held at the Commodore Hotel in New York, the audience laughed uproariously at much bantering about their former status as drunkards. A now perennially sober *bon vivant* contributed the tale of the man who had such a severe hangover he wouldn't take a bromo seltzer because he couldn't stand the noise of its sizzle.



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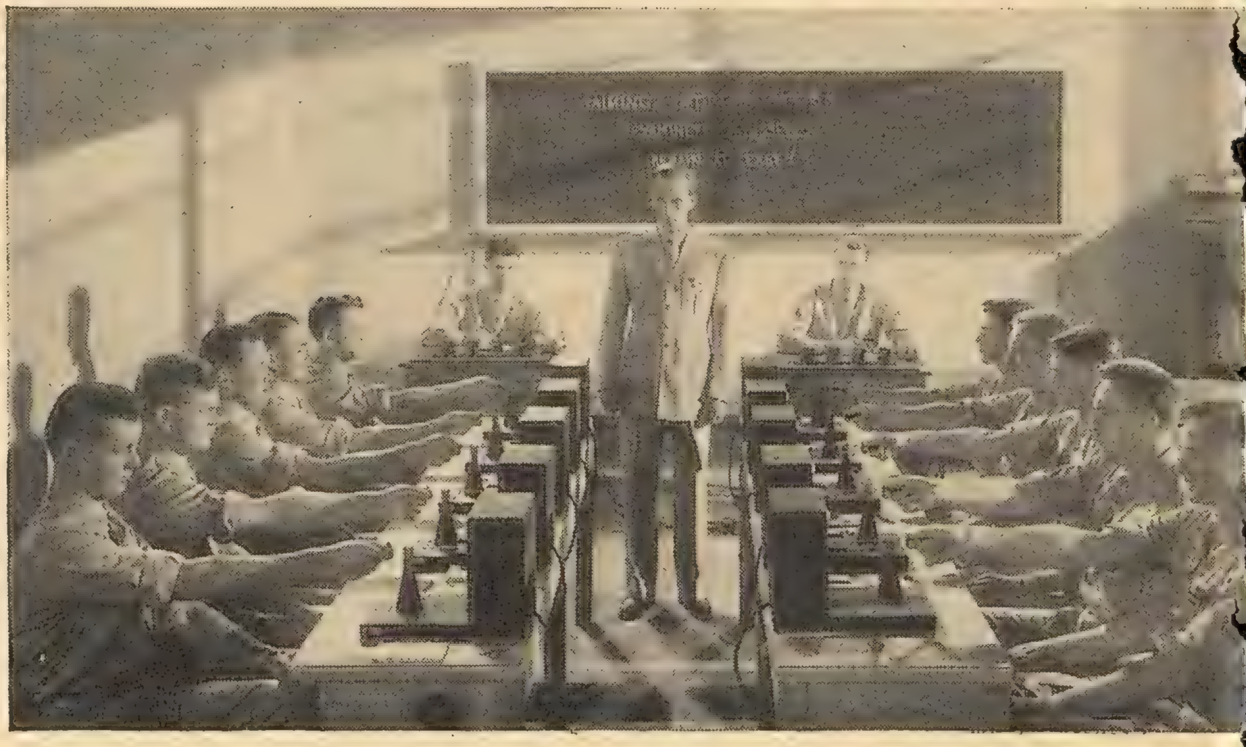
LIBERTY GOES TO THE MOVIES

BY EVE STANLEY

WINGED VICTORY is about three small-town boys (Taylor, McCallister, and Daniels).



After they join the Army Air Force, they sweat through the tough preliminary tests.

In the South Pacific one of the boys (Mark Daniels) gets exciting news from home.

WINGED VICTORY

(Twentieth Century-Fox)
Sgt. Mark Daniels, Pvt. Lon McCallister, Cpl. Don Taylor, and original A. A. F. cast

WHAT may well be the finest picture of this war has blossomed out of Moss Hart's famed Army Air Force stage play, whose talented G. I. cast thrilled Broadway for six months, departed en masse for Hollywood last June, and is now touring the country. Under the aegis of Darryl F. Zanuck, and aided by full government facilities, author Hart and director George Cukor have turned out a film which would have cost five and a half millions if attempted on the usual profit-making basis. (As with the play, all proceeds go to Army charities.) But it's the tender, compelling quality of the script and the freshness of the youthful cast which blend this mammoth production into a living whole.

It's a simple story and yet a tremendous one—the tale of three ordinary boys (Mark Daniels, Lon McCallister, and Don Taylor) who come from a small Ohio town to join the Air Force. It's the story of the hardships, disappointments, and fulfillment which come with learning how to fly. It's the story of the friends they meet—the boy from the Oregon farm, the friendly Texan, the exuberant clerk from Brooklyn—who become closer than brothers. It's the story of their wives and sweethearts who follow them, encourage them, wait for them, cry for them—and yet feel themselves lucky after all.

Day by day and week by week you follow these boys through the big and little moments of a strange, difficult, fascinating life. You watch their disillusion in the first days at camp, see them sweat through the nerve-splitting maelstrom of preliminary tests; suffer with them when one of their group is washed out. You share the sharp nostalgia of the night when they gather for a final celebration, to drink beer and sing the haunting Whiffenpoof song; catch your breath in the tense moment when each one receives his classification. You feel the fine, shy restraint of the girl-wife (Jane Ball) who's beginning to think about babies. And you witness the private triumph glowing on each boy's face as he steps up to receive his silver wings.

Later, you find yourself with a brand-new plane crew, awestruck over the resplendent bomber which has suddenly become the core of all their lives. And finally comes the crashing confusion of real war, down in the South Pacific—the comic-pathetic Christmas party, and the boys' overwhelming realization of what living means; no longer as adventurous, untried youths, but as mature, determined men.

All of these boys, though they are professionals, are now real members of the Air Force; their faces, like those of the girls, are comparatively unfamiliar to the screen, and their performances are spontaneous and youthful. The result, coupled with the stirring authenticity of the settings, and a fine feeling for the greater meaning behind it all, merges miraculously into the Real Thing.

Kitchen utensils adorn a burlesque "Carmen Miranda" at the boys' Christmas show.

The real Andrews Sisters and their G. I. counterparts do some off-screen clowning.

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Fine music, color, and magnificence in a romantic biography of Frédéric Chopin.
GUEST IN THE HOUSE (United Artists). Anne Baxter, Ralph Bellamy, Aline MacMahon.
A psychological thriller about a sweet-faced neurotic who undermines a family.
MEET ME IN ST. LOUIS (M-G-M). Judy Garland, Margaret O'Brien, Mary Astor.
Family life in good old 1903, set off with Technicolor and nostalgic songs.
NONE BUT THE LONELY HEART (RKO). Cary Grant, Ethel Barrymore, Barry Fitzgerald.
Clifford Odets' superbly acted version of the gloomy novel set in the London slums.
THIRTY SECONDS OVER TOKYO (M-G-M). Spencer Tracy, Van Johnson, Phyllis Thaxter.
The splendid, authentic story of the famous 1942 Doolittle bombing raid.

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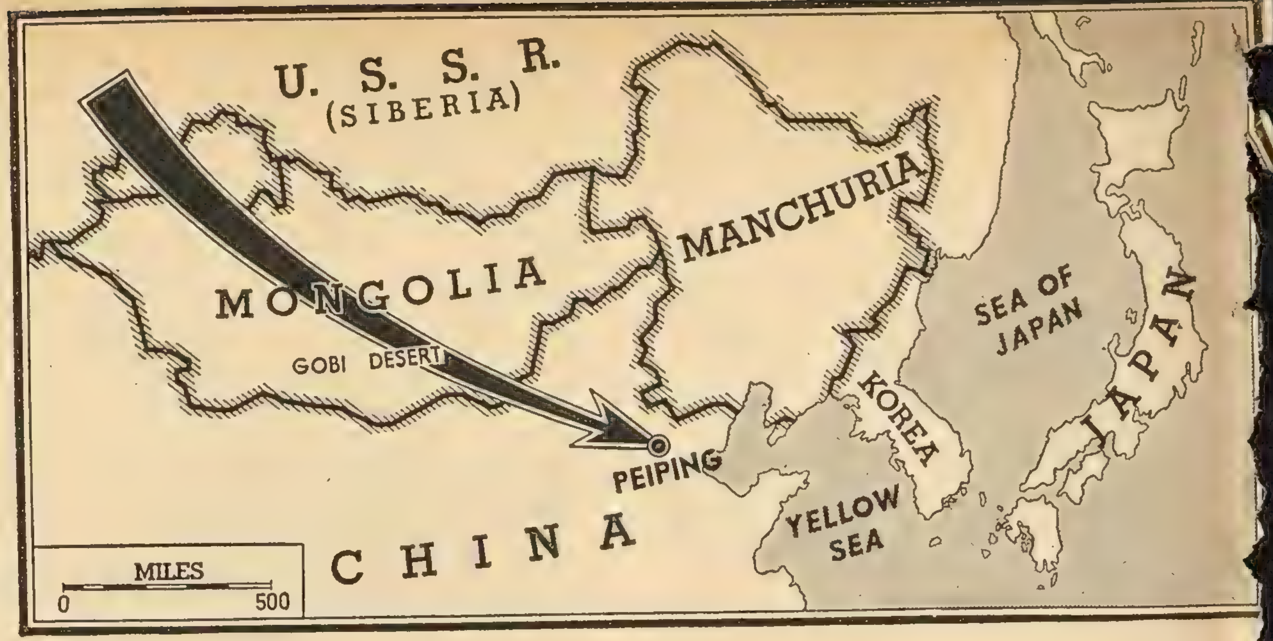

Russia's "short cut" in a war with Japan would be the route across Mongolia.

RUSSIA HOLDS TRUMPS AGAINST JAPAN

Continued from Page 15

the U. S. S. R. Its southeast corner extends to the latitude of the Gulf of Liaotung, hundreds of miles south of the Jap industrial empire in Manchuria. And therein lies a tale, for Russians and Japanese alike.

Marshal Choy Bolsan, premier of the Mongolian People's Republic and commander in chief of its armed forces, is a wise old man of stocky stature, with a weather-beaten face that reminds one of old etchings of Genghis Khan, the great Mongol conqueror. The marshal, who speaks good Russian, wears several Red Army decorations, but he would not talk of them. Nor would he discuss the war or any political questions. But he would dwell at some length on what he called the great miracle of the evolution of his people from a conglomeration of poverty-stricken nomadic tribes into a modern nation.

THE bane of the Mongolian people ever since the days of Genghis Khan was Lamaism. The lamas, through their firm hold over the princes, exerted temporal as well as spiritual power. Between them, the lamaseries and princes owned all the land as well as the cattle, which was the country's wealth. The people were reduced to the status of nomadic serf-shepherds. Under the religion of Lamaism they were kept in perpetual darkness.

In 1921 the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party overthrew the ancient regime. That this was done with Red Army help the marshal sagely refrained from mentioning. Since then the nation has witnessed a generation of progress. Th lamas and princes were dispossessed. Al land was declared state property and wa leased, rent free, to the agricultural population for direct use. The vast herds o cattle were likewise divided among th people. Collective farming and herdin were introduced, paving the way for th abandonment of the old nomadic way o life. With the aid of Soviet Russia, Ulan Bator Khoto was transformed into a modern city. State-owned industrial enterprise were developed. Schools were opened, wit free education for all, and in the shor space of twenty years, more than one ha the population became literate. A Mongolian university was founded where youn Mongolians of talent are trained in the tasks of leadership of a modern nation.

The marshal did not speak of national aspirations, but other Mongolian leaders were not so reticent. They pointed out that two million of their brother Mongols ar living in western Manchuria and anothe million in Inner Mongolia. They are al held in utter subjugation by the Japanese These leaders hope for an eventual federation of all the Mongol tribes under th banner of the Mongolian People's Republi They are confident that in the event o war with Japan, all Mongols would ris and join the Mongolian People's Army. B even they were careful not to discus possibility of war between Russia an Japan.

IN helping to organize the Mongolia People's Republic and tying it to th U. S. S. R. by means of a permanen alliance, the Russians pulled a strateg master stroke. The Japanese, after the conquest of Manchuria, realized thei strategic disadvantage only too well. I 1939 the Kwantung Army decided on speedy conquest of Outer Mongolia, figuring that Russia would stand aside, ju as she had done at the time of the Manchurian annexation.

But this time the Japs came in for sad disappointment. They invaded th country with an army of 50,000 men an 500 planes. The Russians promptly rushe a crack Siberian army under Genera Guriev to the aid of their pressed alli In the bloody battle of Khalkyn Gol th Japs were routed by the combined Russia and Mongolian armies and had to retr with the loss of more than one third their invasion force. They discovered t to conquer Outer Mongolia they wou have to wage total war on Russia. Th Mongolian, on the other hand, celebrat the victory as a sign of the approachi liberation of their entire race.

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During the high mark of the German advance into Russia many units of the Mongolian People's Army rushed westward to the aid of their Russian allies. They fought, once again under General Guriev, in Stalingrad, on the Don, on the Dnieper, and in Rumania. They were organized in cavalry and tank regiments, as motorized infantry and in air squadrons. They acquired invaluable practical experience on the world's bloodiest battlefields. Today many of them are engaged in training their country's young men for the liberation task to come.

THE composition of the Mongolian People's Army is kept a deep secret. However, one sees tank companies in training, and hears the occasional buzz of plane squadrons in the sky. Even with the pressure they exert against the Wehrmacht in Europe, the Russians seem able to divert quite a bit of first-class equipment to their allies. Mongolian leaders claim that they could put as many as a quarter of a million men into the field. They also contend that defections from among their compatriots under Jap rule would swell their forces to twice that number.

One glance at the map of China tells the story of the great strategic importance of Mongolia. From Bulan on the old caravan route, the Gobi Desert stretches southeastward. It is not a desert in the African sense of the word, but rather a grassy steppe of the sort that prevails in the Caspian region of European Russia. In short, it is the kind of terrain over which Russian armored and motorized equipment has proven itself to the greatest advantage. This terrain stretches until it meets the railroad at Kalgan, from which point the broad valley of the Hung-ho runs directly to Peiping and Tientsin. From the Mongolian border to Peiping is a distance of only 320 miles.

The distance from Peiping to Shanghai is approximately the same as from Hong Kong to Shanghai, but the important difference is that the territory to be traversed is the sweeping lowland of central China, where large mechanized armies could roam virtually at will.

In the event of a Russian-Mongolian push across the Gobi, it can be taken for granted that the Mongol dwellers in Inner Mongolia and Chahar would rise and greatly impede a co-ordinated Japanese defense.

Nor is this all the Japs would have to contend with. To the south of such a Russian advance lies the high plateau of Chensi where two Chinese Communist armies are in undisputed control.

For the past year these Communist armies have done little in the way of fighting the Japs. Chances are that this relative inactivity may be part of a co-ordinated policy inspired from Moscow, and that the Chinese Communists are simply preserving their strength for future operations of far greater importance. It is almost certain that coincident with a Russian drive from Mongolia the Communist armies would push eastward, down the Hwang-ho valley in the direction of Kaifeng. A situation of this sort would place the Japanese forces in central China in a virtually hopeless position. Add to this the landing of a strong American Army on the south China coast and the Chinese strategic picture, from the Allied point of view, is complete.

There would, of course, still remain the powerful Kwantung Army in its entrenched Manchurian position. Given the opportunity, it could turn southward and strike at the left flank of the advancing Russian-Mongolian forces. But it is highly unlikely that Russian strategists will grant the Kwantung Army this opportunity.

Manchuria juts almost 400 miles into Siberia. It is encompassed by Russian territorial pincers from the west, north, and east. Strategically, it presents a thoroughly unenviable picture. Russian over-all strategy has proved itself in the European theater of war. It is certain that in the event of a Russian drive from Mongolia, the Far Eastern Red Banner Armies, strongly reinforced from European Russia, would strike vigorously from all three sides. A strategy of this nature would give the Kwantung Army no chance to turn against Russian-Mongolian forces. It would have to engage in a do-or-die struggle on the Manchurian plains or be driven into the Korea peninsula for a last-ditch stand.

The all-important question, of course, is, will Russia go to war against Japan?

It's not possible to give a positive answer now. Russian policy is framed within the strictly guarded confines of the Kremlin walls, whence no advance hint is allowed to leak, until the decisions taken have materialized into direct action.

However, there are straws in the wind. For one thing, there have been an increasing number of statements out of Moscow, including that in Marshal Stalin's Revolution speech last November in which Japan was referred to as an "aggressor nation." For another, the Soviet government would meet with no opposition on the part of its population in the event of war on Japan. Quite the contrary. The peoples of Siberia and Mongolia look upon Japan as their archenemy who cannot be trusted under any circumstances. A decisive step to end what they consider a continuous threat to their security would arouse their enthusiastic support.

It is true Russia has suffered tremendous losses as the result of Hitler's aggression. There is hardly a Russian family which does not number at least one war casualty among its members. But Russia has also reaped the harvest of her titanic effort. Not only has she won the respect and admiration of the entire world; she has also disposed of one of the two potent menaces that threatened her with national annihilation.

HOWEVER, the second menace—that from the east—still remains. Russians from all walks of life understand that there can be no abundant life for them, no relaxation of watchfulness on their part, so long as Japan's great continental power remains unimpaired. They also know that the crushing of Japan's ruthless ambition to rule the entire Eastern World would ensure their own happiness and prosperity for generations to come. They are prepared to pay the price.

There are other indications. One cannot fail to notice an almost continuous movement of matériel across Siberia eastward. As yet this movement is a mere trickle, but with the conclusion of hostilities in Europe it is likely to swell into a broad stream. Since Russia is well aware that Japan is in no position to attack her while at the same time waging war with the United States, Great Britain, and China, this movement can have only one meaning.

One thing, however, may be taken for certain. Russia is not going to tackle Japan all by herself. The Russian people want to see their allies carry their full share of the burden of land fighting in Asia.

Until the Philippines have been reconquered and powerful American armies are ready to land on the coast of China, it is highly doubtful whether Russia will make a move.

For twenty years Russia, with a strategic eye on the future, has been patiently preparing the short cut to Shanghai. Will she make use of it?

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JAN. 13, 1945

PAUL HUNTER
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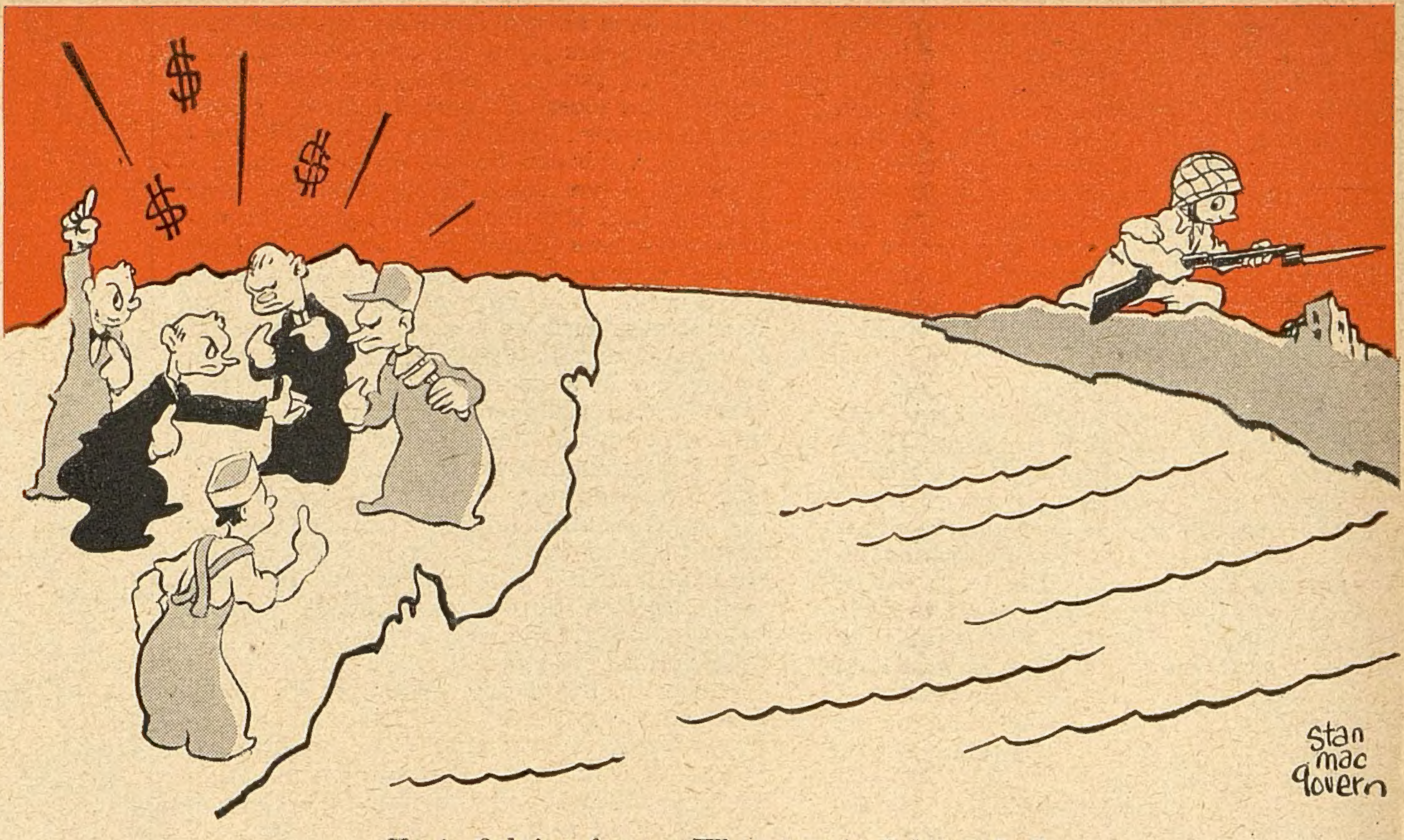


He is fighting for us. What are *we* fighting for?

SHOULD WAGE RATES RISE TO MEET LIVING COSTS?

IT is a remarkable fact that so far in the war few of us here on the home front have experienced real inconvenience, to say nothing of actual privation. So accustomed have we become to this unique state of affairs, that we now are beginning to feel entitled to enjoy it, no matter how long the war lasts nor how intense it becomes.

This is evident in the growing pressure on the part of labor organizations to crack the so-called Little Steel formula which is supposed to hold wage increases to the 15 per cent which living costs are supposed to have risen. It is contended, not without reason, that living costs have now risen far beyond this 15 per cent. Therefore the Little Steel formula is no longer valid.

This all seems logical enough, but it is only fair to ask who will pay the increased wages if labor gets them. Will it be the "bloated corporations"? Will the increases come out of industry's profits? The answer is no. Increased wages for labor will be paid by the American taxpayer. It cannot be denied that big profits are being earned by business, but most of these go to Uncle Sam under our excess profits tax. Added labor costs mean less excess profit payable to the government. This, in turn, means that more of the war will have to be paid for by taxpayers of the future, including the men and women now doing the fighting.

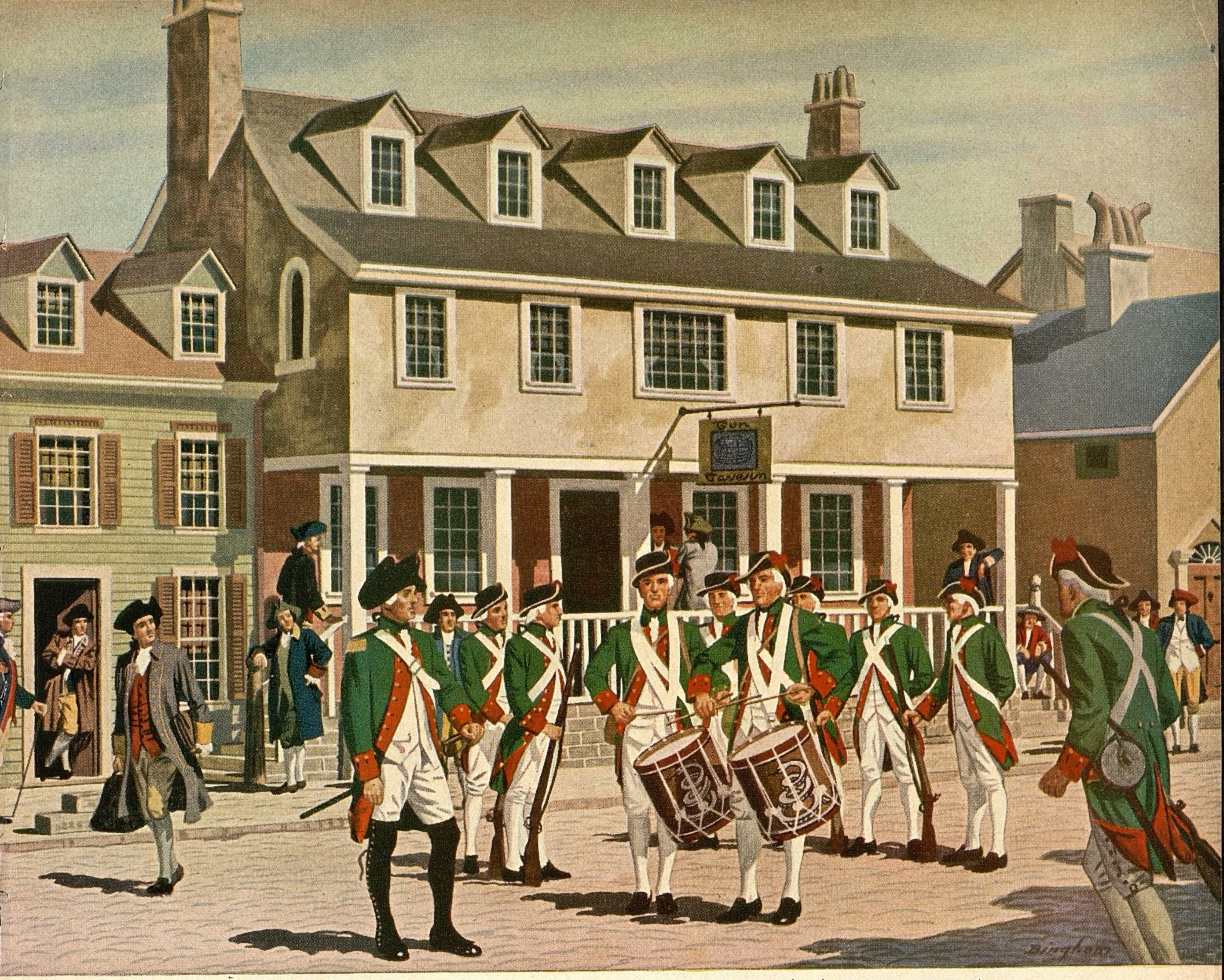
Labor's contention that wages should keep pace with rising living costs leads to the conclusion that we on the home front feel we should sacrifice not at all during the war. If living costs rise, wages should rise to meet them. How, then, will we do our part, or don't we think we have any part in the struggle other than to get all we can while the getting is good?

Technical efficiency has increased during these war years and higher wage rates may be possible and desirable after the war. This is a matter we can thrash out when the time comes. It has nothing to do with the case now. The war is very expensive as it is. Fighting tools cost a lot of money. Raising wages will make them cost still more on the one hand and lower the total of taxes flowing into the Treasury on the other.

There are instances where individuals really are suffering because their income has not kept pace with living costs. But mostly these are people with fixed incomes, civi employees and white-collar folks. Raising the wages of labor will impose an even heavier burden on these groups by forcing prices still higher.

We are in this war for survival and all of us must expect to bear some of the burden When we started, there was much talk o sacrifice, of pulling in our belts, and of undergoing privations gladly. Those among us who can look themselves in the eye and honestly say they have done so to the point where it hurts may be entitled to a raise. The rest of us have a lot of nerve to expect one.

Paul Hunter



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